

The Gulf  
war:  
hit or myth?

Page 12

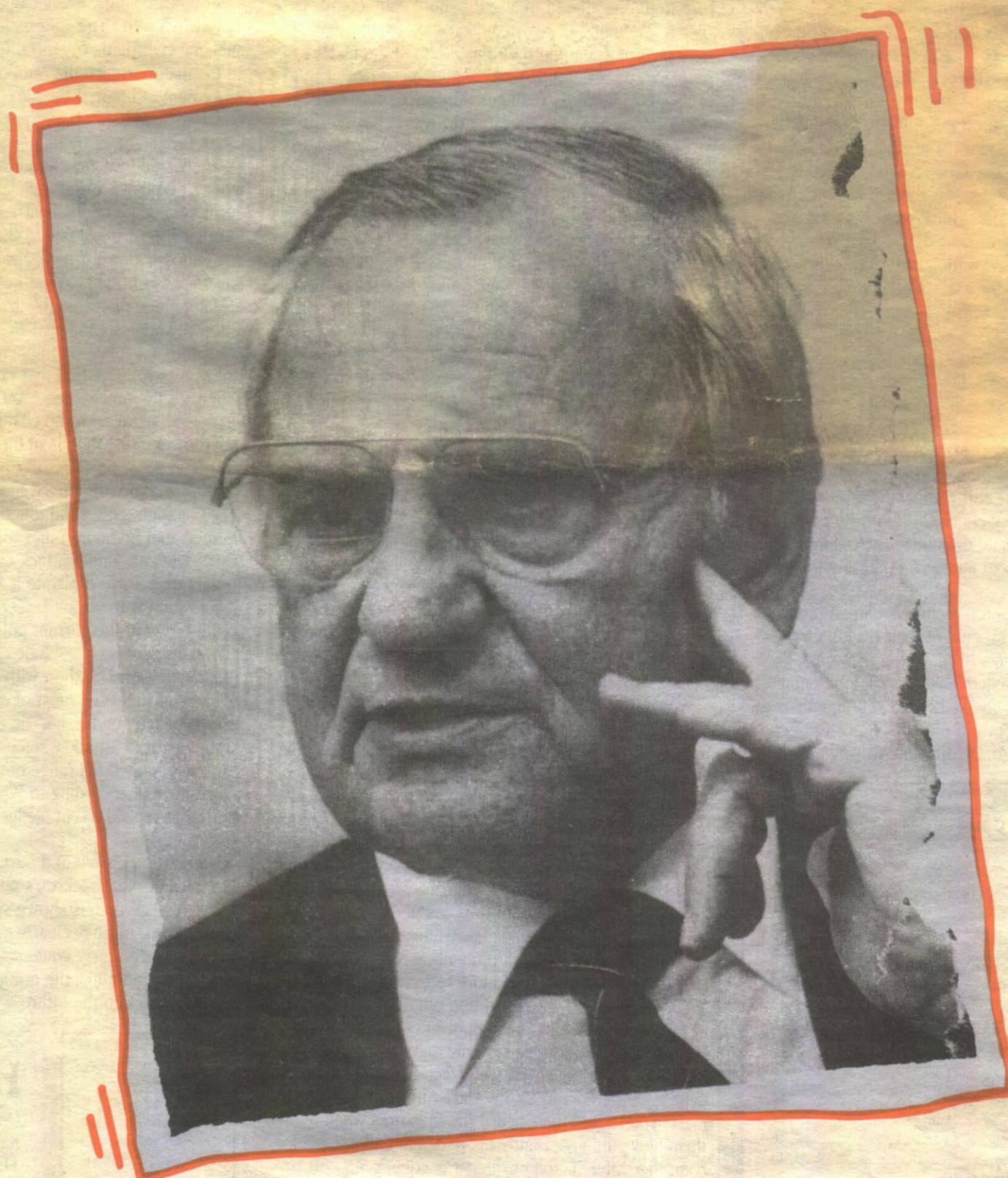
# IN THESE TIMES

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**Would you buy  
a new car  
from this man?**



**John B. Judis reports  
on Iacocca's Chrysler  
PAGE 3**



# PUSHing for survival without Jesse Jackson

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

When Rev. Tyrone Crider resigned his post as head of Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity) on March 16, he revived the spirits of those pundits who predicted the civil-rights group would die shortly after the 1983 exodus of Rev. Jesse Jackson, its founder, president and *raison d'être*. What's more, Crider offered his resignation during a blizzard of negative publicity about the group's poor financial health.

By all accounts, PUSH is in trouble. Its current problems and dismal prospects raise serious doubts about the group's survival and, by extension, the viability of the entire civil-rights community.

Jackson founded Operation PUSH in 1971, and by the time he left in 1983 to mount his maiden presidential campaign, the words "Jesse Jackson" and "PUSH" were virtually synonymous. Crider was the last of four attempts to fill Jackson's large shoes: Chicago attorney Thomas Todd served as acting president during Jackson's '84 campaign; Rev. Hycle Taylor took over for a short stint following Todd; and Taylor was succeeded by longtime insider Rev. Willie Taplin Barrow—the first woman to lead the group.

**PUSHing youth:** A preacher prodigy who virtually grew up at Operation PUSH, the 34-year-old Crider seemed a natural—though somewhat risky because of his age—choice for the position. For several years, Crider served as head of PUSH-EXCEL, the organization's educational component, where he gained a reputation as a competent administrator and compelling orator. Some board members said they chose Crider partly because they thought his age would dramatize their commitment to leadership development and give PUSH a more youthful image.

Many of those same board members helped force his resignation. The general theme of their discontent was that Crider was in over his head. During his reign, PUSH's financial problems escalated. Last month, for example, the organization had to lay off 12 paid staff members and curtail a number of important projects. Since Crider's ascension 14 months ago, PUSH's fund-raising activities

have not borne the usual fruit.

"After much prayer and consultation, I have come to the conclusion that I can no longer serve as national executive director of PUSH," Crider wrote in his resignation statement. "At this point in my life, I desire to focus more on my preaching ministry and personal development."

A major boycott of Nike Inc. also was initiated under Crider's watch and, although media pundits have declared the boycott a failure, many black organizers credit PUSH for prompting Nike's new interest in minority hiring. "We have won the boycott because [Nike] are being responsive," says Rev. Henry Williamson, the newly elected national president. "That is all we wanted them to do." Williamson, who is a former president of PUSH's Indianapolis chapter and a member of the group's national board, said Nike recently has hired a number of black professionals, contracted with a black public-relations firm and has become generally more involved in the African-American community.

**Renewing alliances:** At a recent news conference announcing the change in PUSH management, Williamson announced that the organization's entire leadership structure would be altered to afford a more democratic operation. More telling than Williamson's words, however, was the range of the group that joined him at the PUSH podium. The usual lineup of community organizers and political leaders was augmented by such unlikely prospects as Chicago Police Superintendent LeRoy Martin and Water Reclamation District Commissioner Thomas Fuller.

Williamson claims the diversity of the group is an intentional signal that PUSH intends to reach out to all sectors of society. "We are sharpening our focus in developing a strong domestic agenda that addresses the nation's social and economic needs," he said, noting that Martin has expressed interest in developing programs designed to teach children respect for the law. During the news conference, Williamson—who is pastor of a South Side Chicago church—repeatedly stressed the role of religion in PUSH's new direction. Through the churches, he said, "we are going to save the black family."

Williamson's strong church emphasis recalls the civil-rights movement's early days and is an open challenge to those theorists who blame the movement's current malaise on outmoded methods and clergy-based leadership. Those are not the only changes afoot: PUSH's new chief appears to be backing away from the black nationalist embrace that comforted some of his predecessors. During the tenures of Taylor and Crider, for instance, speakers from the Nation of Islam (NOI) often shared the microphone during meetings. NOI leader Louis Farrakhan himself has addressed many PUSH crowds.

Williamson made clear that his methods will be a bit different. "As we sharpen our focus, we must reinstate our dialogue with the Jewish leaders in the community," he said. "They must see themselves as our allies." And since PUSH cannot invite followers of Farrakhan to address its meetings while maintaining alliances with Jewish leaders, Williamson must plan to ban Black Muslim speakers.

**Too black, too strong?** Crider has made himself unavailable for comment during this period of transition, but one supporter contends the young clergyman was a victim of conservative board members who thwarted his every move to make PUSH more relevant to young people and who eventually hounded him out. "For example, most of the board members are supporters of Mayor [Richard M.] Daley," he said, speaking only on condition of anonymity. "Well, [Crider] wanted to endorse [independent black Democrat] Danny Davis in the [mayoral] primary. You should have heard the fireworks when he told them he would give Danny his personal endorsement. Soon thereafter, Tyrone Crider was gone."

Davis' candidacy was a symbolic attempt to end the political factionalism that has stymied the African-American community since the death of former Mayor Harold Washington. Daley won the primary with a 30 percent margin of victory over former Mayor Jane Byrne and Davis, his closest challenger.

Like other PUSH critics, the anonymous Crider supporter argues that the organization is behind the times and much too timid in its approach. In fact, there is growing sentiment in the African-American community that civil-

rights organizations in general have outlived their usefulness. So widespread is the discontent that half those surveyed in a poll published in the August 1990 edition of *Black Enterprise*, a magazine targeted to upper-income African-Americans, said they thought black Americans did not have effective leadership.

"The big surprise in 1990 was the ascendancy of Louis Farrakhan, who was cited most after [Jesse] Jackson as the leader who speaks for black America," wrote the editors in introducing the poll. "The choice of Farrakhan in conjunction with Jackson suggests an African-American

## INSIDE STORY

preference for leaders who go against the established order in articulating a black agenda."

**Speak no evil:** The widespread lack of affection for mainline civil-rights organizations has hurt the coffers of all the major groups; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the National Urban League have all fallen short in fund-raising efforts.

"There's nothing new about failing to pull in enough money," explains NAACP official James Williams. "That's our normal state of affairs. There's been a drop in funds, but that's most likely due to the recession. When there's an economic downturn, blacks are always the ones who have to absorb the heaviest impact."

Maintaining the venerable tradition of speaking no ill of fellow members of the civil-rights fraternity, Williams refused to speculate on implications of PUSH's troubles. He dismisses the notion that civil-rights groups are out of sync with the times. "The NAACP has been here for 82 years, and we've seen the changing of the times and endured the shifting moods of the country. I think we can withstand these times also."

Frank Watkins, an official in the hobbled National Rainbow Coalition (NRC) and longtime Jackson aide, says these should be boom times for civil-rights organizations. "Civil rights are under attack everywhere, from the courts to the Congress to the state legislatures," he notes. "An organization with strong leadership and a clear message would thrive in the current political climate."

Watkins seemingly excluded the NRC from consideration as that organization with the potential to thrive. "We're concentrating most of our efforts on the Washington, D.C., statehood issue," he explains. Jackson's duties as the district's "shadow senator" and television talk-show host have limited his range of motion and narrowed his interests. Still, according to Watkins, Jackson has raised more than a \$250,000 in pledges to help PUSH through its financial crisis.

After all is weighed and measured, there's little disagreement that Jackson's absence is PUSH's greatest deficit. The group has shown spurts of relevance since his '83 departure but has clearly lacked the legitimacy that Jackson mysteriously conferred. By returning PUSH to its civil-rights traditions, the group's new leadership is hoping to get back to the future.

## CONTENTS

Inside Story: PUSHing back to the future .....	2
Killing Chrysler Corp. ....	3
The First Stone/In Person .....	4
In Short .....	6
North Carolinians burn toxic incinerator plan .....	7
Serbian leader flirts with disaster .....	8
Democracy Salvadoran-style .....	9
The growing ranks of Brazil's "shirtless and shoeless" .....	11
Myths of the Gulf war .....	12
Editorial .....	14
Letters/Sylvia .....	15
Viewpoints: Speaking as citizens .....	16
Ashes & Diamonds by Alexander Cockburn .....	17
Life in the U.S.: Porn renditions .....	18
Media beat .....	19
In Print: Capitalism and the damage done .....	20
Classifieds .....	23
Guilty by Suspicion and the black days of Hollywood .....	24

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\$150,000

\$43,379



## HELP!, part II

Once again this week money has only dribbled in to our \$150,000 fund campaign. We received \$1,185 from 33 subscribers, bringing our total so far to \$43,379. That puts unseemly pressure on us, so please send in a contribution today. Send checks to: ITT, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chicago 60647.



By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

**T**WELVE YEARS AGO, AS CHRYSLER TEETERED on the edge of bankruptcy, Chairman Lee Iacocca took the unprecedented step of nominating United Auto Workers (UAW) President Douglas Fraser for the company's board of directors. Iacocca's decision, made under pressure from the union, appeared to usher in more cooperative European-style labor relations in the automobile industry—labor would have a voice not only in shop-floor matters but in major investment decisions.

From that movement, Chrysler's fortunes looked up. With the UAW's help in lobbying Congress and the Carter administration, the company secured multibillion-dollar loan guarantees that rescued it from insolvency. And instead of squandering the company's money on mergers, Iacocca invested in new models—the K-car, which became the first successful American small car, and the mini-van, one of the most profitable innovations in the history of the automobile industry. By 1984, Chrysler was rolling in cash, and its chief executive was being touted as a future presidential nominee.

But the once-proud Chrysler has again been reduced to penury: it lost \$2 billion in auto sales last year and its bonds are rated "junk" by Standard and Poor's. With *Consumer Reports* warning its readers against Chrysler transmissions, the company may not be able to hold out until fall 1992, when its much ballyhooed new models come on line. Rumors abound of buyouts by Mitsubishi and Fiat.

As its business has plunged, Chrysler's labor relations have also deteriorated. Once the model for the auto industry—and perhaps for all American business—Chrysler has become the invidious norm. Nothing signified this more clearly than Iacocca's decision last month to oust Owen Bieber, Fraser's successor as UAW president, from the Chrysler board of directors. Bieber was one of five directors who were cut from the 18-member board. Iacocca called the decision a cost-cutting measure to rescue the company, but it will save Chrysler only about \$50,000 a year—less than 1 percent of Iacocca's annual compensation. In addition, 10 other non-management directors could have been canned before Bieber.

The fall of Chrysler and Iacocca—and the abandonment of the labor experiment begun in 1979—is another blow to the Democratic Party. Throughout the last decade, Iacocca was the Democrats' Moses: a wildly successful industrialist who believed in labor unions, industrial policy, rebuilding urban ghettos and national health insurance. But now he stands revealed as yet another narrow-minded businessman who found it temporarily convenient to position himself as a friend of labor and industrial democracy.

**Bum transmissions:** To be fair, Iacocca does not deserve all the blame for Chrysler's economic collapse. During the '80s, Japanese-built facilities in the U.S. produced 1.5 million cars a year, even though annual car sales have been stalled at 12 million since 1985 and are not expected to increase in the near future. This has created an over-capacity crisis in the industry. The current recession has also hurt all automobile manufacturers. Winter sales for Chrysler, Ford and General Motors together were down 23 percent from last winter, while sales for Japanese cars



Lee Iacocca's once-proud Chrysler Corp. has again been reduced to penury.

## Iacocca spins his wheels, leaves labor in the dust

were down 13.5 percent.

But Chrysler's decline began before the recession: it registered its first losses in the last quarter of 1989, and from 1989 to 1990 its share of the U.S. auto and truck market dropped a significant 1.5 percent—from 13.8 to 12.3 percent. By the end of this year, Honda will surpass Chrysler in American car sales.

Iacocca is to blame for this earlier decline. In the mid-80s, Chrysler used its newfound profits to buy airline and defense companies and to dabble in Italian racing cars rather than investing in a new chassis, or "platform," that would succeed the boxlike K-car, and new engines to replace Chrysler's balky four cylinders. By 1989, Chrysler's midpriced cars were getting murdered not only by Honda and Toyota but even more by Ford's extremely successful Taurus.

At the same time, Iacocca, following General Motors' recipe for failure, elevated financial experts within the company's management and forced out Chrysler President Harold Sperlich, a brilliant engineer who had helped design the K-car and mini-van and who had been agitating for Chrysler to put its money into a new platform. In 1988, after Chrysler's car sales first began to slide, Iacocca finally relented and put money into a four-year project to build a new platform.

Since then, Chrysler's strategy has been to tough it out until fall of next year, relying on the highly profitable mini-van and jeep sales to balance continuing losses in car sales. But *Consumer Reports'* panning of the transmission used in Chrysler's 1991 mini-van has dealt that strategy a mighty blow. According to a recent marketing survey, 46.5 percent of mini-van customers are now looking at alternative brands because of reports

about Chrysler's defective transmissions.

**Proud protectionist:** As Chrysler's condition has become increasingly critical, Iacocca has begun to look abroad for help—first to Fiat, whose owner is a personal friend, and then to Mitsubishi, with whom Chrysler jointly produces cars in Normal, Ill., and whose Colt cars Chrysler has sold for almost 20 years. But so far, both companies are reluctant to buy into Chrysler. The only suitor Chrysler has attracted is one that it doesn't want—Los Angeles billionaire investor Kirk

### The Democrats' Moses brings a plague upon the Chrysler house.

Kerkorian, who in recent years quietly has amassed 9.8 percent of Chrysler's stock, making him the largest private stockholder.

Iacocca has also called for government help in the form of protection against Japanese competition. In a February 10 *New York Times* op-ed piece he wrote, "Those who say that protectionists have their heads in the sand have it exactly backward. The real ostriches are those who believe that we can survive economically by simply ignoring those who target our market while protecting their own."

In late February, Iacocca led a delegation of Big Three automakers to the White House to demand that President Bush put a cap not only on Japan's imports but also on its market share in the U.S. However, Iacocca got an icy reception for this proposal, which might benefit American automakers but not necessarily help American workers.

**Drug addicts:** Rebuffed by government, Iacocca has begun to sound less like the Democratic Moses than the Republican Nebuchadnezzar he was before 1979. (The Republican Iacocca was Richard Nixon's favorite automaker.) In an interview in the April 8 *Fortune*, Iacocca attributes the success of Japanese carmakers in America to their building plants in rural areas where they don't have to hire drug addicts.

"Should I go to Iowa to build a plant and screen the workers to make sure they're young and they haven't been on drugs? Do that kind of screening in Detroit and you won't have anybody working for you," Iacocca explained. Such a statement was not only cruel but stupid, alienating Chrysler workers in Detroit, many of whom have waited patiently for the company to reopen its Jefferson Avenue plant.

Iacocca has already issued an apology for his unfortunate statement, and he has tried to allay UAW anger at Bieber's ouster by insisting that the union head was serving on the board as an individual rather than as a union representative. The union, however, has always conceived of the seat as belonging to the union rather than the person occupying it.

As Fraser explained in a telephone interview last week, the UAW had demanded representation on the board in 1979 after Chrysler in England admitted union representatives to its board of directors. Fraser resigned from the board when he retired as president of the union, and Bieber replaced him.

The Democratic Iacocca used to share this conception of the union's board seat. In an interview in March 1990, Iacocca told me that the relationship he had with Fraser was "personal," but that after Bieber came on the board, "we sort of institutionalized it."

He went on to assess positively labor's role on the board. "It's a mixed bag, but if you're going to cooperate, what's wrong with the head of a labor union knowing exactly what you are doing and what the problems are and what your profit motive is?" Iacocca said. "Has it broken down the adversarial relationship? I think I can call Bieber the way the heads of auto companies can't. We're together, not every three years, at negotiations. I see him 15 times a year."

Some auto analysts believe that Iacocca got rid of Bieber simply because he had become uncomfortable with a labor representative on the board. "Bieber has for seven years been voting against things they want and kind of impacting on the country-club boardroom collegiality that Iacocca would like to have at the board level," one knowledgeable labor source explained.

But other industry analysts believe that Iacocca got rid of Bieber to make Chrysler more attractive to companies such as Fiat and Mitsubishi. One factor in their reluctance to buy a significant stake in Chrysler may have been the presence of a union member on its board of directors.

If one of these companies, attracted by Iacocca's house cleaning, does buy Chrysler, then the chairman's move will have been worth it, whatever irritation it's causing within the union. But if Fiat and Mitsubishi continue to balk, then Iacocca will have further jeopardized his company's future.

If Chrysler again faces bankruptcy, as it did in 1979, it will not survive without the UAW's enthusiastic support. □



By Joel Bleifuss



### Heil and smile?

Are there parallels to Nazi Germany and the U.S. today? Yes, a few.

To ready themselves for military conquest, both countries exhibited and enforced a zealous love of flag and country, as seen in this year's Superbowl halftime show and Leni Riefenstahl's 1934 propaganda classic *Triumph of the Will*.

The leaders of both countries—reacting to the respective humiliations of Vietnam and Versailles—further helped restore national confidence by building up and then deploying military forces, as was done in Grenada and the Rhineland, Panama and Austria Czechoslovakia, and Iraq and Poland.

As President George Bush said in November 1990, "To be very clear about these efforts to exhaust all means for achieving—all means for a diplomatic and political solution—I am not suggesting discussions that will result in anything less than Iraq's complete withdrawal from Kuwait, restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government and freedom for all hostages."

According to William Shirer in *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, in May 1939, Polish Foreign Minister Col. Jozef Beck responded to Adolf Hitler's unilaterally determined terms by saying: "It is clear that negotiations in which one state formulates demands and the other is obliged to accept those demands unaltered are not negotiations."

In January 1990, Bush vowed that the U.S. would attack "sooner rather than later" and "that this will not be another Vietnam ... our troops will not be asked to fight with one arm tied behind their back."

In August 1939, Carl Burckhardt, a Swiss League of Nations Commissioner at Danzig, Poland, reported that Hitler told him "that if he had to make war he would rather do it today than tomorrow" and "that he would not conduct it like the Germany of Wilhelm II, who had always had scruples about the full use of every weapon."

In December 1990, *Los Angeles Times* columnist Jack Nelson reported that administration officials had this to say about U.S. Gulf strategy: "Bush assumes that the American public will be mainly concerned about the number of U.S. casualties. Not the tens of thousands of Iraqis who stand to die or be maimed in a massive air assault and that even the killing of thousands of civilians—including women and children—probably would not undermine American support for the war effort."

In August 1939, Hitler made these remarks to his military commanders vis-a-vis Poland: "I shall give a propagandist reason for starting the war—never mind whether it is plausible or not: the victor will not be asked afterward whether he told the truth or not. In starting and waging a war it is not right that matters but victory. ... Be steeled against all signs of compassion. ... Whoever has pondered over this world order knows that its meaning lies in the success of the best by means of force."

### Off limits and out of control

In January, I proposed that it was time to think about liberating major media outlets from their corporate owners. Robert W. McChesney, a journalism professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, sent me a scholarly article he recently wrote, titled "Off-limits: An inquiry into the lack of debate concerning the ownership, structure and control of the mass media in U.S. political



## Vera Saeedpour: Kurd advocate

By Laimdota Mazzrins

Vera Beaudin Saeedpour's Kurdish husband never wanted her to become politically active on behalf of his people, nor was this originally on her agenda. But because of what she calls "the responsibility that goes with knowing," this conscience-driven woman has become the leading U.S. advocate of the 25 million Kurds who are facing cultural annihilation in their divided Middle Eastern homeland. A one-woman operation for most of its 10-year history, the Kurdish Program has had an impact, through its activities on behalf of Kurdish survival, that is vastly out of proportion to its modest size.

Close to a million Kurds have been forced into exile by the governments of Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq. Only a fraction of those—5,000, according to one estimate—have come to the U.S. And many of them fear that if they admit their ethnic identity or get involved in cultural activities here, this will lead to reprisals against their families back home.

One of the latter was Homayoun Saeedpour, a civil-engineering student whom Vera Beaudin met while working on her doctorate in education at Columbia University. Shortly after their marriage in 1975, he asked her to explain to him the definition of "Kurd" in the *Oxford Standard Dictionary of the English Language*, which read, "One of a tall, pastoral and predatory people." Vera Saeedpour, who had studied sociology as an undergraduate, was taken by surprise. She decided to take two weeks off to do research and find out whether or not she had married a predator.

The result was a scholarly article, "Killing Them Softly," and letters to Oxford and other publishers persuading them that their dictionary definitions were discriminatory. The definitions were changed.

**Pieces of the pie:** Saeedpour's research convinced her that the post-World War I parcelling out of what had been the Ottoman portion of Kurdish lands between Turkey and the newly created states of Iraq and Syria was the worst disaster to befall the Kurds in their 5,000-year history. The second worst was the first division of Kurdistan between the Turkish Ottoman and the Persian Safavid empires in the 16th century.

She says, "I felt that as the Kurds were a sizable population straddling those borders, they would be perceived as a threat by those governments as long as they had this consciousness of kind. And therefore it would be in the interest of those governments at least to assimilate them—or, failing that, to annihilate them as a culture."

"I couldn't see any evidence that the Kurds had tried to take over somebody else's land, and I assumed that the main reason they were being called 'predatory' was because they were reacting violently to being encroached upon themselves. You discover this in black studies, in Jewish studies, in the history of any kind of discrimination in the world where stereotypes have been used to present a negative image of a people in order to rationalize someone else's agenda."

Despite her husband's objections, Saeedpour became obsessed with the Kurdish cause. "Once I knew about the Kurdish issue," she says, "then it



really 'destroyed' my life."

Her father, an orthodox Jew and "a hippie kind of philosopher," had raised her to have an exacting conscience, she says. "I kept thinking that there's a responsibility that goes with knowing. The thing that was the kicker for me was my being a Jew. I had always complained that it wasn't fair to indict just the Nazis for what happened. It was all of the world that decided they had more pressing priorities. I thought, I have to do something about those people, because otherwise I will be like the silent people I've been indicting."

**For the cause:** A turning point came in 1981 when her husband died of leukemia. Saeedpour decided to keep his name and consolidate her efforts to bring the plight of the Kurds to public attention. She founded the Kurdish Program, a non-profit educational and cultural organization that gets its tax-exempt status through Cultural Survival Inc., an association founded by Harvard anthropologists to support endangered ethnic groups. Saeedpour's program, however, finances itself through private contributions.

From the beginning, the Kurdish Program has been as many-sided as its founder, serving as a public-relations clearinghouse, a resource bureau and a cultural center. It sponsors panels and lectures; publishes scholarly monographs and a semiannual journal, *Kurdish Times*; and supplies background reports to journalists, Congress members and international organizations. Lawyers from around the country contact the program for help with political-asylum and immigration cases. Further, the program runs an oral-history project and a Kurdish dance theater, has curated a traveling photo exhibition and maintains a museum of Kurdish costumes and ethnic artifacts.

"The more I worked at it, the more it grew, and the reward for that, of course, was more work, more responsibility," says Saeedpour, the program's director and for many years its sole volunteer worker.

With volunteer help the program expanded, and in 1986 Saeedpour and a friend bought a handsome brownstone in Brooklyn's multicultural Prospect Heights section. Its main floor now houses the Kurdish Library, the only one like it in the world. The library contains more than 1,500 volumes, 1,200 slides, a cassette and videotape collection, historical maps and newspapers, as well as special collections of photographs and historical documents. Last year Saeedpour established the Kurdish Heritage Foundation to support the library's ongoing work.

The library is both cozy and exotically luxurious. The narrow front parlor is crammed with glass cases displaying mannequins in Kurdish costumes of hand-loomed wool, brocade and velvet dresses from Iran and Iraq, headgear, snowshoes and musical instruments. The walls are covered with photos of Kurdish life, framed documents and faded historical maps of Kurdistan. In the back are the library proper and the computer and fax machine that connect the program with its users and supporters around the world.

**Under one roof:** Saeedpour, now 60, is modest about her success. "I have no right to speak for the Kurds," she insists, "but I certainly represent the point of view that any people in this world has the same right as any other people to exist."

The fact that the Kurdish Program is a purely American effort and does not compete with existing Kurdish organizations has won it the trust, if not the financial support, of Kurds of all political persuasions, as well as non-political Kurds who just need help.

One letter recently received from an Iraqi Kurdish refugee reads, "It has been 15 months now since the day we were driven out of our homes into exile and refugee camps in Turkey and forced to live a life that is less desirable than death itself. We have

been deprived of the most elementary necessities of life, let alone education and civic life. We lack even the elementary clothing to protect us from the heat of the blazing summer and the killing cold of the winter. ... You can see the hopelessness and utter depression in the eyes of all these luckless people who feel they would have been luckier to have been lost at sea and never heard from again." The letter is headed simply: "Written to Lady Vera."

This refugee is one of the "expendables," says Saeedpour. She says they are individuals who are exploited and destroyed as the world's leaders pursue their own geopolitical goals. Helping individuals has always been a major function of the Kurdish Program.

When she is not immersed in relief work, Saeedpour acts as an unofficial lobbyist for the Kurdish people. She is convinced that, despite the official pronouncements, the U.S., Turkey, Iran and Syria are backing the Kurdish uprising in northern Iraq, with the end goal the establishment of a limited autonomy such as that negotiated in 1970 between the Kurds and Saddam Hussein's predecessor.

"I am not sure that Bush is not interested in having a fragmented Iraq," she says. "I fear that the Iraqi Kurds will end up being used as the vehicles through which the geopoliticians can maintain the divisions made after World War I. The quid pro quo for Turkey's acquiescing to that autonomy would be that the Kurds would fall into a Turkish orbit in the context of the new security arrangements they are making in the Gulf. Turkey would have a lot to say about how that autonomy is exercised. Of course, the Kurds were very much for the war. They want revenge. They would do anything to get rid of Saddam Hussein. They see him as their greatest enemy. That is not true: geopolitics is Kurdish enemy No. 1."

**Clear vision:** Although she has spent the last decade dedicating her life to helping the Kurdish people, Saeedpour has also spent that time following the bloody Kurdish infighting. In recent weeks, she has been helping journalists get into Kurdistan, a job she does willingly, if with doubts. "I hope we don't bring the Kurds to the point where we glamorize them and romanticize them because they are the latest human-rights novelty. We have a problem in this society that is worrying me more every day—a tendency to look through rose-colored glasses at people we call 'victims.' Once we proclaim a group to be victims, we immediately suspend any moral judgment of their behavior. They are responsible for nothing but promoting themselves as victim," she says.

"The real victims are not those in the Kurdish diaspora who are living here or in Europe but the women and children in Kurdistan who are caught between the warring factions. It is when you lose sight of the suffering of the remote individual who has nothing that you have lost your humanity."

It is this humanity that Saeedpour sees as one of the casualties of the Gulf war. "It is wrong that we can take a whole people and make them less than we are. We really believe that people in the Middle East are less than us, that we have to show them how to be human," she says.

"That is the tragedy," she continues. "That we in the U.S. could go to war and not see that we have killed a couple hundred thousand victims of Saddam Hussein—that wasn't a volunteer army that we killed. And it is worse that, because of the technology, we didn't see the blood."

In the meantime, the Kurdish Program goes on. Saeedpour says her aim is "to stop the suffering. If I would say I have any agenda, it's that: to stop the suffering." (She is also desperate for horizontal architectural files in which to preserve rare Kurdish textiles and documents.)

Laimdota Mazzarins is a freelance writer based in Cologne, Germany.

life." A drastically condensed and slightly edited version of "Off-limits" appears below. Those interested in the subject should read the complete edition, which will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Communication*, a journal edited by the University of Illinois College of Communications.

McChesney writes: "In many countries, the very issues of how the mass media are controlled, structured and subsidized are inexorably linked with issues of free expression and participatory democracy. Hence, debates over media policy are carried on in the political arena and can attract popular discussion. The U.S. has remained distinctly immune from this tendency. Despite having a media structure that has become concentrated in the hands of some two dozen enormous corporations that earn the lion's share of their revenues advertising the products of other major corporations, American political culture has failed to question whether this media system is compatible with democracy.

"There are three explanations why discussions about the institutional and structural arrangements of the mass-media system are 'off limits' in U.S. political culture.

"First, this inability to publicly debate the capitalist basis of the mass media is a function of the more general inability to fundamentally criticize capitalism itself in U.S. political culture....

"The second explanation for the lack of debate is that the corporate media have actively and successfully cultivated the belief that the status quo is the only rational media structure for a democratic and freedom-loving society. As the late CBS President William Paley said in 1937, 'He who attacks the American system [of broadcasting] attacks democracy itself.' This 'laissez faire' media ideology has been internalized to such an extent that it has become an article of faith for anyone committed to democracy.

"Furthermore, commercial broadcasters and the major media corporations seek to establish two things. First, that the capitalist media setup is the best possible system. And second, that the status quo—unlike any alternative—is innately non-partisan and committed to the truth rather than any sort of ideological ax-grinding. This is a critical point that a highly concentrated media system must establish. Unless it can establish social neutrality, the very legitimacy of its system as a primary dispenser of political information is quickly, and rightfully, suspect. As they pursue their agendas, the major media corporations rely on the ideology of professional journalism—regardless of its merits—to legitimize the media oligopoly.

"Professional journalism legitimizes the system since it shifts responsibility for media performance from the economic context to the specific conduct of reporters and editors who, following a set of professional standards, operate within a pre-supposed broader context. Indeed, the logic of the ideology is such that the actual ownership and support mechanisms become incidental to explaining news-media performance. Interestingly, not only does the ideology of professional journalism exempt media corporations from public scrutiny, it exempts the journalists themselves. Beneath a shallow cover, professional journalists often exhibit contempt for public criticism of their conduct, regarding it as 'un-informed.'

"Paradoxically, as far as any form of media criticism is palatable to professional journalists, it is criticism from the right that receives play in the mainstream press. Arguably, this is due to the flattering manner in which right-wing media critics stress the autonomy and power of the journalists and editors over the news product. The alternative situation of a press corps being roundly praised by conservatives for their subservience to the powers-that-be would hardly meet even the rudimentary standards for a profession and would cast the legitimacy of the entire media structure into doubt.

"The third explanation for the lack of legitimate debate regarding the ownership, structure and control of the media in U.S. political life relates to the nature of the corporate media themselves. Given the media's control over the flow of information, few politicians have any desire to antagonize the media industry as a whole, with the conceivable repercussions that might entail for their political careers and agendas. Further, the corporate media are in an ideal position to control the public perception, or lack thereof, of any possible debate regarding the control and structure of the mass media.

"These explanations are not intended to gloomily forecast that any alteration of existing conditions will be forever impossible. The American Century is literally and figuratively nearing an end. Eventually this may provide an opening in U.S. political culture for the criticism of capitalism. Any viable campaign to reconstruct the media system must be part of a broad-based mass movement to reform the basic institutions of U.S. society. Without this radical—or at the least, non-mainstream—political foundation, any effort at media reform will quickly be washed up."



## If looks could kill

A peek through the Pentagon's looking glass reveals the completion of a so-called "death-ray laser," designed to puncture and destroy enemy eyeballs in a single flash. Code-named "Project AOC," for Army Optical Countermeasures, the gun is currently in the "test deployment" stage and was used against Iraqi soldiers during the Gulf War, according to *The Spotlight*, a Washington, D.C.-based "populist" magazine. *The Spotlight* reported earlier this year that a crash program to perfect the laser weapon was assigned to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency in 1986 and has since remained "the Army's most urgently funded priority project."

## Returned to sender

It seems the Pentagon recruited more than soldiers in its war against Iraq—the U.S. Postal Service was in on it too. Last December, the Des Moines, Iowa-based Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament mailed to the Iraqi minister of education a package of 40 "peace cards" made by local children. The package, marked "SERVICE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED," was returned March 14. Scrawled on the box—presumably by a U.S. postal employee—were the words "Trouble or Shit," and an arrow pointing to the word Iraq. "I find it terribly upsetting that government employees feel they have the right to vandalize a piece of private property with violent, racist graffiti," says campaign organizer Ed Fallon. "Our effort to send a message of peace and reconciliation has been greeted by a response of hatred and insensitivity."

## No world order

The demolition has finally been televised. *No Place to Hide*, billed as the only Gulf war film to circumvent both U.S. and Iraqi censors, visits an Iraq devastated by 60,000 U.S. bombing runs. Narrated by Ramsey Clark, the attorney general under President Lyndon Johnson, the film was unveiled last month at the University of California at Berkeley and was followed by a sold-out lecture on rising U.S. hegemony by stalwart linguist Noam Chomsky. One scene depicting charred, shrapnel-filled bodies of Iraqi bystanders apparently didn't play well with CBS, NBC or CNN. All three networks had promised to air portions of the film and to interview Clark but later reneged, according to the event's sponsor, the Emergency Committee to Stop the U.S. War in the Middle East.

## For art's sake

The U.S. Treasury Department has looked out from under its pinko-colored glasses to lift a 30-year ban on the importation of Cuban paintings, drawings and sculpture. The new exemption to the trade embargo against Cuba settles a lawsuit brought against the U.S. government by the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee (NECLC) in 1989 that cited a violation of the "free trade in ideas" legislation adopted by Congress in 1988. "We are pleased that First Amendment interests finally have prevailed over the foreign-policy goals of the embargo," said NECLC General Counsel Michael Krinsky. "It took this litigation to make the Treasury Department concede that paintings are different than cigars."

## The thin red line

Members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and the Citywide Responsible Banking Alliance have accused the New York-based Manufacturers Hanover Trust of withholding housing loans from Hispanic and black communities in Harlem. The accusations of redlining stem from the release of a 300-page study of housing loans made by the bank's Harlem branches. According to the *National Catholic Reporter*, the report alleges that the branches had an average of \$105 million in deposits for the past three years but made only \$100,000 in annual mortgage loans during that time. The Interfaith Center is also quick to point out that Manufacturers has close ties to banks in South Africa.

Please send timely news about local activities, follow-ups on stories we've run or other interesting bits of information—including your address and phone number—to: Kira Jones, In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

## Pentagon gas guzzlers waste national energy policy

WASHINGTON—Dissatisfaction with the Bush administration's recently unveiled energy policy has focused on its failure to stress conservation. Critics say the Gulf war should have taught us that conservation must be the cornerstone of U.S. energy policy.

But the missiles, tanks, warships and aircraft that were used by U.S. forces in the Gulf consume enormous amounts of oil. This poses a dilemma for administration officials, who may be reluctant to urge the public to cut back on using oil when a similar policy of conservation, if applied to the Pentagon, would cripple today's oil-dependent military.

According to Michael Renner, a researcher at the Worldwatch Institute in Washington, D.C., the Pentagon is the biggest single U.S. consumer of petroleum. Renner says that in peacetime the U.S. military uses the equivalent of 37 million tons of oil each year—enough to run the entire U.S. mass-transit system for 14 years. And this figure does not include fuel used by the U.S. Department of Energy's nuclear-weapons program or the military's space program.

Oil supplies 79 percent of the Defense Department's energy needs, according to Department of Energy military specialist Tom Cutler. By comparison, he says, oil accounts for about 42 percent of overall U.S. energy use.

Writing in the July 1989 issue of *Armed Forces Journal International*, Cutler estimated that in peacetime, the military uses just 2 to 3 percent of the oil consumed annually in the U.S. This figure is misleadingly low, however, because, as Cutler notes, one-third or more of the U.S. military's oil consumption takes place outside the U.S.

Fuel use by the military jumps dramatically in wartime. For example, in 1940 the military's share of the

nation's total energy budget was only 1 percent. In 1945, following the U.S. entry into World War II, military consumption had jumped to 29 percent of the total.

The Persian Gulf war saw the first large-scale use of a new generation of weapons, aircraft, ships and military vehicles that consume far more fuel than their predecessors did. As a result, the fuel used by military equipment today is generally tabulated in gallons per mile, gallons per minute or barrels per hour, rather than in miles per gallon.

The Pentagon's biggest oil-eaters are the Navy's diesel-powered aircraft carriers, which average 134 barrels (5,628 gallons) per hour, and battleships, which average 68 barrels (2,856 gallons) per hour.

At its top speed of 25 knots, the U.S. aircraft carrier *Independence* consumes 150,000 gallons of fuel a day. Steaming to the Persian Gulf, the *Independence* consumed an estimated 2 million gallons of fuel. And even while just "standing by" in the Gulf, the carrier, with its crew of 2,300, consumes massive amounts of fuel to purify 380,000 gallons of water each day and to produce enough electricity to power the equivalent of a city of 40,000 people.

The U.S. Army's new breed of tanks are also voracious consumers of oil. The 120,000-pound M-1 Abrams tank uses up to 252 gallons of fuel per hour. According to the Center for Defense Information in Washington, D.C., it takes more than 600,000 gallons of fuel a day to supply the needs of a modern armored division of 348 tanks. With the same amount of fuel, a fleet of 348 GM Geo cars could circle the Earth at the equator more than 3.4 times.

The U.S. Air Force, however, is the armed services' fuel-use leader—and, taken together, military aircraft account for 61 percent of total oil consumption by the Pentagon.

A B-52 bomber uses, on average, 3,612 gallons of fuel each hour, while F-4 fighter-bombers average 1,640 gallons an hour. A fully loaded passenger jet uses about 17 gallons of

fuel per minute, but at full throttle a F-15 fighter with just one man on board burns 25 gallons a minute. Then, when an F-15's pilot fires up his afterburner he can triple the aircraft's speed, but he also increases the plane's fuel consumption to an astonishing 240 gallons a minute. An F-16 jet burns more fuel in an hour than the average U.S. civilian car consumes in two years—more than 1,052 gallons.

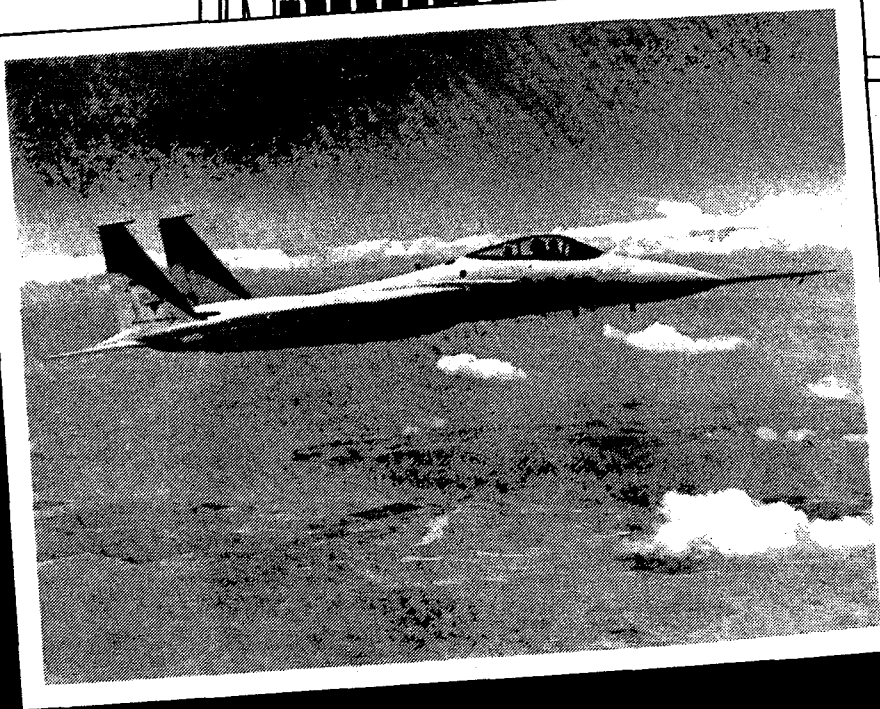
During the Gulf war more than 300 such jets were deployed with four aircraft-carrier groups in Gulf waters, and an additional total of about 725 jets were stationed in Saudi Arabia.

Fuel accounts for a startlingly high proportion of the total weight of military goods and supplies shipped to the Gulf in preparation for war. "In a modern military force," Cutler says, "two-thirds of the weight of supplies would be for petroleum alone." *Jane's All the World's Aircraft* recently reported that a fully loaded C-5 Galaxy military cargo plane taking off on a 6,000-mile flight weighs about 418 tons. Nearly 40 percent of that weight—some 167 tons—is fuel.

Figures on the fuel costs of the Gulf war are not yet available. But just the first two weeks of Operation Desert Shield, before the war began, saw more than 2 billion pounds of weapons, food, medical supplies and ammunition assembled at U.S. ports and airfields to be transported to the Gulf region. The volume of this initial two-week buildup alone exceeded that of the massive 1948 Berlin airlift. Hundreds of millions of gallons of fuel accompanied these shipments, and additional hundreds of millions of gallons were expended by the cargo planes that carried them.

The Pentagon's extravagant consumption of oil lends credence to Cutler's arresting conclusion that "during times of peace the military's primary mission is to ensure oil supplies for the national defense." And the energy cost of the Persian Gulf war suggests that waste is basic to U.S. energy policy in wartime.

—Lawrence Lack & Gar Smith





By Sandy Smith

DURHAM, N.C.

**W**HILE NORTH CAROLINIANS FLAUNTED their conservatism last year by re-electing Republican Sen. Jesse Helms, 1990 was also the year thousands of the state's rural citizens proved that, though they may be set in their ways, they are no slouches when it comes to toxic waste.

A groundswell of public opposition to state plans to build a regional toxic-waste incinerator and landfill thwarted Republican

## ENVIRONMENT

Gov. Jim Martin's campaign to meet a Jan. 1, 1991, deadline for siting the facility. The deadline was set by a five-state waste-disposal agreement among North and South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky.

Congress has encouraged states like North Carolina—which cannot manage its own hazardous waste—to form such interstate “compacts,” under which member states must take on their share of the toxic burden in exchange for the right to continue dumping beyond their borders. Federal courts, however, have held that such agreements violate interstate-commerce laws and are unenforceable.

Still, the failure of Martin's plan moved South Carolina and Alabama—states that have long accepted more than their share of out-of-state toxins—to threaten an import ban on toxic materials from North Carolina.

Missing the deadline has also put North Carolina at risk for the loss of millions of dollars in Superfund allocations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Superfund law requires states receiving aid to certify that they have a hazardous-waste disposal plan. The North Carolina conflict has implications for other states, including Florida, Georgia and Mississippi, which belong to no pact and currently export wastes to several states.

Many North Carolina environmentalists support the concept of interstate cooperation on waste disposal. The idea was promoted by grass-roots organizations in states with weak regulations on interstate dumping. But the saga of Martin's year-long campaign to site the incinerator has little to do with responsible waste disposal. Rather, it is a throwback to the “out of sight, out of mind” mentality that has long characterized U.S. environmental policy.

State officials proposed building a \$70 million state-owned incinerator to be run for profit by ThermalKEM, a large waste-management corporation based in Rock Hill, S.C. In the rush to meet the January deadline North Carolina officials zeroed in on Butner, a community in rural Granville County that is home to numerous institutions housing prisoners and mental patients. Few sites in the country have such a high concentration of citizens who are unable to exercise their civil rights.

**Not NIMBY pimby:** “State officials thought they could site it there quickly and not meet a lot of opposition because it would be on state land and near state institutions, but it didn't work that way,” says Harold Jenkins, spokesman for the Granville Non-violent Action Team (GNAT), one of several grass-roots groups that formed to oppose the incinerator.



Residents are demanding more responsible hazardous-waste management.

## North Carolinians burn toxic incinerator plan

Involvement has been remarkably diverse, including blacks and whites, students and retirees, liberals and conservatives.

“When you're talking about the air you breathe and the water you drink, it crosses political boundaries,” says Jenkins. “We're beginning to see that the “not in my backyard” arguments are not enough. If it's in the next county, it also affects me.”

Public opposition grew during the spring and summer as site testers went from one rural county to the next. The teams were greeted everywhere by hundreds of newly minted environmental activists, who packed meeting halls and staged protests.

Residents said they were frightened by recent press revelations that state regulators ignored violations at a privately run chemical incinerator in western North Carolina for years before finally shutting it down in 1988. Last month the EPA placed Lick Mountain, near Lenoir, on a priority-action list of contaminated sites and confirmed that toxic emissions are linked to health problems in former employees.

**Direct action:** By the fall, when state test teams narrowed their search to Butner, public opposition boiled over. Sixty-two members of GNAT were arrested during three days in September as they protested testing at the site.

As of early December, more than 20 lawsuits had been filed against the state to stop the incinerator. One of the last suits was filed by the city of Durham, which lies 15 miles to the south. City officials feared the incinerator would contaminate Durham's water supply, a lake located near Butner.

Although it was intended to clarify the

issue, a public forum on the incinerator proposal held by Durham's City Council in December served more to alarm citizens by revealing the dearth of data on public-health consequences of burning toxic waste.

Joe Carvitti, a spokesman for ThermalKEM, attempted to reassure residents, claiming that the company's incinerator in Rock Hill, S.C., “has the best compliance and safety record in the country.”

But in fact, that incinerator has had three explosions and was cited less than one year ago by both EPA and South Carolina authorities for 17 violations, including grossly exceeding the “feed rates” for arsenic and chromium, a practice that increases toxic emissions. GNAT passed out fliers on the violations to the crowd attending the forum.

Granville resident John Pike spoke of EPA reports that acknowledge the agency has not identified all emissions from burning toxins, much less assessed total risks to the public. “The [North Carolina] Hazardous Waste Management Commission has avoided answering the question of whether this facility will hurt the public, and, quite frankly, that frightens me,” he said.

**“When you're talking about the air you breathe and the water you drink, it crosses political boundaries,” says organizer Harold Jenkins.**

Before a supportive audience, Pike maintained that responsibility for disposing of chemical wastes belongs not to the state but to industry. He questioned why taxpayers should assume liability for contamination from an incinerator. Pike said Granville residents also object to the large size of the proposed incinerator and the plan for it to accept waste from states outside the five-state compact.

EPA whistleblower Hugh Kaufman, assistant to the director of the Hazardous Site Control Division, told the forum that EPA regulations, even when enforced, are inadequate to protect the environment and human health.

“The major generators of hazardous waste do not want to handle those wastes in their own backyards,” he said. “So the state of North Carolina has raised its hand and said, ‘We're going to be patsies.’”

He called the five-state compact “a ruse to help North Carolina promote the financial interests of ThermalKEM.”

**Out of site, not mind:** Two weeks after the hearing, the governor's push to site the facility by the January 1 deadline was derailed when the Democratic majority on a council of the state's 10 highest elected officials voted overwhelmingly against putting the facility at the Granville County site.

Within hours of the vote, South Carolina and Alabama officials publicly announced a ban on acceptance of North Carolina's toxic waste in their states. (More than half the chemical wastes from North Carolina companies are currently shipped to toxic-waste facilities in South Carolina.) But federal courts in both states have ruled that such bans violate interstate-commerce clauses in the U.S. Constitution.

In January, South Carolina Gov. Carroll Campbell petitioned President Bush to cut off \$15 million to \$18 million in EPA Superfund monies slated for North Carolina to use in cleaning up 23 contaminated sites. The EPA has not yet ruled on his request.

Having lost the first round, Martin resorted to grandiose rhetoric, calling the failure to site the incinerator “the greatest failure of this or any other state government in modern times.” Industry groups responded by pushing lawmakers to relax the guidelines the state's Hazardous Waste Management Commission must follow.

In contrast, organizers are now focusing on the root of the problem. A coalition of 26 environmental and community groups are backing a bill in the North Carolina legislature that requires industries to reduce the amounts of toxic waste they generate. Similar waste-reduction laws have passed in more than a dozen other states.

That strategy received a boost from a recent report in the *Winston-Salem Journal* that state industries cut toxic-waste production by 15 percent last year. If that rate continued, the report noted, the need for an incinerator could be reduced by half by 1994. Indeed, the state's own newly created Office of Waste Reduction reports that in 1989 hazardous waste-producing industries succeeded in reducing waste shipped off site by 25 percent.

“Somewhat of a revolution” is underway in waste reduction, state officials concluded in the report. Someone should send a copy to the governor.

**Sandy Smith** is a journalist living in Durham, N.C.



This is the first story in a two-part series on Yugoslavia.

By Paul Hockenos

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

**F**OR THREE DAYS IN MARCH, DURING YUGOSLAVIA'S gravest post-war crisis, the many peoples of this multinational state peered together into the abyss of civil war. While the country has stepped back from the precipice of armed conflict, the dynamic of confrontation remains in place.

The experience, however, has caused the Yugoslavs to think twice about their country's course. As the smoke clears over the federation's six republics and two "autonomous" provinces, a new, more workable political scenario has emerged. On the agenda again are efforts to negotiate a way out of Yugoslavia's complex constitutional and national morass.

Perhaps most critical, dramatic events in Serbia spell the beginning of the end for Serb President Slobodan Milosevic. Yet, the autocratic ruler remains in office. And true to his character, the leader of Yugoslavia's largest and most powerful republic will stop at nothing to retain power until the very end.

**The road to ruin:** Milosevic's strong-arm nationalist policies lie at the source of Yugoslavia's present dilemma. Manipulating a potent Serb-first nationalism, the provincial Communist Party apparachik soared to the republic's top post in the late '80s with overwhelming popular support. In Yugoslavia's fragile patchwork of nationalities, religions and languages, Serbia's belligerent rhetoric and Machiavellian tactics sparked a logical chain reaction to threatened republics, and minorities responded with separatist national programs of their own, setting the country on a course of disintegration

## Serbian leader brings Yugoslavia to the brink of disintegration

and civil war.

While the other republics brought Milosevic's anti-communist nationalist counterparts to power in the 1990 elections, the Serbs stayed with Milosevic's renamed communists, the Serbian Socialist Party (SPS).

### NATIONALISM

The SPS' near-total control of television and radio played only a marginal role in its December victory. The suppressed nationalism that precipitated the democratic revolutions in the rest of Eastern Europe had already found expression in Serbia. Convinced of Milosevic's infallibility on national issues, the liberal democratic opposition toed an anti-communist version of the president's line. The SPS' strongest rival, the Movement for Serbian Renewal, embraced an even more far-fetched chauvinism. Demagoguery and cheap emotionalism undermined real political discourse. Nationalism hit fever pitch across the country, accelerating the moves of Serbia's neighbors to break with the federation as quickly as possible.

The recent string of crises in Serbia, however, has altered the country's political landscape for good. For the first time, the focus of politics in the republic has shifted from the "anti-Serb" designs of the "separatist Albanians" or the "fascist Croats" to the question of democracy in Serbia. An authentic democracy movement has emerged to confront a drastically weakened Milosevic. It is a movement with which the future of all of Yugoslavia is closely bound.

The turning point came in the days of March 8-13, the first phase of last month's crisis. When thousands of opposition nationalists took to the streets March 8 to protest state control of the media, Milosevic responded with riot troops, tear gas, water cannons and, finally, live ammunition. Two people were killed in grisly Belgrade street battles. Brought to power with the motto "No one will ever harm a Serb again," Milosevic enraged the Serbian population with the crackdown. Protests erupted, branding the president "Saddam Sblo" and "Milosevic the killer." The ruler panicked and ordered tanks into central Belgrade.

Only when the army withdrew the next morning did it become clear just how severely Milosevic's power base had been shaken. Belgrade university students, most originally Milosevic supporters, occupied Terazije Square for three nights. In contrast to the nationalist opposition parties, their protests and demands were non-partisan, secular and peaceful. Belgrade's broad solidarity with its "children" signaled that the SPS had lost the population's trust.

**Fighting crisis with crisis:** More isolated than ever, the Serb president moved to the federal arena to consolidate his power. Since his rise to office, Milosevic has steadily laid the grounds for an all-Yugoslav showdown. Whether in a Serbia-dominated federation, a military dictatorship or an expanded "Greater Serbia," the ruler's ultimate motive was to impose Serbian hegemony on Yugoslavia. As a communist, his ostensible commitment to the maintenance of Tito's centralized federation won him the backing of the army and the bureaucracy. As a nationalist, he won legitimacy from the people.

His claim to embody the ideals of the united federation, however, was never more than a pretense to pursue a strong-arm separatist policy. His modus operandi implicitly destroyed any hopes for a federation or reworked confederation among the republics. To the contrary, it drove the other republics in the opposite direction. As Yugoslavia fell apart at the seams, the threat of civil war grew and conditions for a military takeover became ever riper.

Finally, Milosevic played his last card, instigating the second phase of the crisis. On

March 13, Borisav Jovic, the Serbian representative of Yugoslavia's collective federal presidency, the country's highest governing body, declared the "unity of Yugoslavia" in jeopardy. At Milosevic's bidding, Jovic, the federal government's acting president, moved to impose a state of emergency on all of Yugoslavia. The collective presidency itself, composed of representatives from each of the republics and provinces, was unlikely to impose military rule of its own accord. In-

deed, the collective body blocked calls for a military clampdown three times. The real calculations behind Milosevic's desperate call for an all-Yugoslavia crackdown are open to speculation. One scenario is that, over the heads of the presidency, a united military command would impose martial law on the country. Another line of speculation envisioned an outright putsch and military takeover with Milosevic governing behind the scenes. A third possibility is that the military itself would have split, grouping into pro- and anti-Serb forces. The country divided and the military strength behind the Serb faction, Milosevic might have used the initiative to grab large chunks of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. In any of the scenarios, civil war would have been a fait accompli.

When the collective presidency rejected Serbia's plea for the army's mobilization, the presidency's Serbian, Montenegrin and Vojvodinian representatives resigned, leaving the ruling body emaciated and the country in constitutional limbo. The power vacuum left the army free to act. The country waited nervously as fears of a coup grew to a crescendo. But nothing happened. The army had balked.

Either Milosevic's tactic was a bluff, aimed at blackmailing the presidency itself into declaring martial law, or he had overestimated his support in the military. The army's inaction has in no way removed it from the political arena. The conservative communist brass still wields considerable muscle and has made it clear that it will not stand idly by in conflict. The military as a whole, however, has proved that it will not function as Milosevic's instrument. The army's fate is inextricably bound with that of a united Yugoslavia, an ideal that Milosevic has now openly flouted.

The fear that swept the country during the apogee of the crisis was as real as was the threat of war. On the streets of Belgrade and Zagreb today, the nationalist fervor has noticeably ebbed—if only temporarily. The state presidency has resumed work, and a new dialogue among the republics is underway. Key to an all-Yugoslavia solution, the March crises have shown the peoples of Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina that neither the Serbs nor the army are united behind Milosevic. New initiatives are in progress to link the republics' democratic oppositions, a prerequisite to ousting the present nationalist leaders.

The economically interdependent republics also realize that war would spell certain disaster to their already-ailing economies. A year of trade wars, budget disputes and political bickering has only plunged the Yugoslav economy further into decline, international loans have been blocked and production has fallen off sharply. Economists unanimously agree that an independent Serbia or Croatia would fail miserably.

The recent turmoil has also been a much-needed boost to the country's prime minister, Ante Markovic, the leading proponent of an all-Yugoslav solution and architect of the country's economic reform. Over the past six months, the secessionist strivings of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia rendered the prime minister virtually powerless. It is Markovic, however, who holds the purse strings to Western credit and aid. But until all-Yugoslav federal elections are held, Markovic operates

Continued on page 10

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# Rightist intimidation wins in El Salvador

By Chris Norton

SAN SALVADOR

**W**ELCOME TO DEMOCRACY SALVADOR—an-style, where intimidation is the name of the game. The bullying is practiced chiefly by the ruling Arena Party, which has evolved from the rightist death squads that party founder and ex-Army Intelligence Major Roberto D'Aubuisson allegedly operated in the early '80s to a powerful, well-greased political machine. Along with the support of most of the country's businessmen and landowners, the party also gets a boost from middle-class

## LATIN AMERICA

and poor voters who believe Arena's slick Madison Avenue campaign promises of "progress."

Arena won control of the Salvadoran Assembly in 1988. In 1989, its millionaire coffee-grower candidate Alfredo Cristiani was elected president. Although Arena failed to win an independent majority in the recent March 10 assembly and municipal elections, its continued control is assured with the votes of the rightist Party of National Conciliation (PCN).

Despite the fact that only half of El Salvador's registered voters turned out for the elections and Arena won the votes of less than half of those, party ideologues have taken on a triumphalist attitude. Seeing themselves as the representatives of unrestrained free-market capitalism, they feel vindicated by the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and believe they are riding the crest of the wave of history.

"We're looking not only at one or two more terms but a longer period of domination for a center-right party," says Ernesto Altschul, President Cristiani's deputy chief of staff. Many believe that such assuredness in one's divine right to rule doesn't bode well for democracy. "The right won't allow [the left] to win," says one Western diplomat. "The right doesn't understand that democracy means losing as well as winning."

In fact, not letting the left win is one of the main causes of the bloody, decade-long civil war still raging in El Salvador. Rightist military governments robbed elections victories from a center-left coalition in 1972 and again in 1977, spurring disillusioned young political activists to form small armed guerrilla cells.

**Just like old times:** Arena's behavior in last month's elections was hardly a convincing demonstration that irregularity and fraud are merely memories of the distant past. In most small Salvadoran towns, it is a risk to be an active member of a leftist party. Prior to the elections, sympathizers were threatened, fired from jobs and beaten up; their offices were broken into, searched, surrounded by troops and bombed.

On February 21, a candidate for the smallest leftist party, the Democratic National Unity (UDN), and his six-months pregnant wife were machine-gunned to death after ignoring telephone threats that he would be killed if he didn't withdraw from the race or leave the country. Another UDN candidate was shot in her eye by an Arena gunman during a clash between the rival groups on the final night of the campaign.

Aside from general intimidation, Arena's game plan appears to have been to discour-

age a large voter turnout—which both the party and the army believed would favor the opposition—and to try and help their political ally, the PCN, pick up seats in the provinces where the vote between the PCN and the Democratic Convergence, an alliance of three left parties, would be close. They appear to have been successful at both.

**'Twas the night before voting:** The night before the vote, the Arena-dominated Central Elections Council decided to change the polling sites in a number of populous, working-class suburbs of the capital where the opposition was expected to do well. On election day, many polls in these areas opened late, either because of disputes over election-official status or because the elections council delivered the ballot boxes late. Frustrated by the changed locations, late openings and the long lines under the hot tropical sun, many voters just went home. Some of the polling sites that opened late closed with hundreds of voters still in line.

"Arena did everything possible to obstruct the vote of the opposition," said one Latin American diplomat. "That's very clear."

But more grievous was the mysterious disappearance of tens of thousands of names—some election observers estimate up to 10 percent of eligible voters—from the voting lists. Thus, although many voters possessed valid voting cards, they weren't allowed to vote.

In the eastern town of Chinameca, which the Democratic Convergence had expected to win easily, Arena won by about 200 votes. The Convergence estimates that about 700 of its supporters weren't able to vote because their names didn't appear on the voting lists.

"I can't believe that those were just coincidental mistakes of the Central Elections Council," says Hector Silva, a U.S.-educated doctor who won a seat as Convergence deputy in La Libertad.

Within the Salvadoran voting system that allows smaller parties to pick up a departmental deputy with a relatively small number of votes, shaving a few hundred votes here or there from the Democratic Convergence and giving them to the Arena-aligned PCN may have significantly altered the election results. Although the Democratic Convergence outpolled PCN nationwide, because of the deputy allocation system and perhaps because of fraud, the PCN Party will now receive more deputies.

"There was clearly a fraud," says Antonio Canas, a senior political analyst at the Jesuit-run Central American University in San Salvador. "It doesn't square. The PCN does so well, yet it hasn't done anything to increase its vote and it's clearly a party in decline. That's been the trend."

**Democracy surprise:** Despite the widespread irregularities, the official U.S. observation team termed the elections "free and fair," as did the National Republican Institute for International Affairs, which called the elections, "a major step forward in the con-

solidation of democracy in El Salvador" before boarding a plane back to the States the following day.

The U.S.-dominated Organization of American States (OAS) did little better. In contrast to last year's Nicaraguan elections, attended by a total of 700 international observers, the OAS had only 160 observers in a country with twice the population, and it issued a whitewashed report accordingly.

Because of the opposition's allegations of fraud, vote counting wasn't completed for almost two weeks. Arena was the biggest vote-getter, with 44 percent. Still, this was a 10 percent drop from the party's 1989 showing. With only 39 deputies, Arena will fall short of the 43 needed to maintain its majority in the assembly. Maintaining control won't be hard, though. Arena's rightist ally, the PCN, will have nine deputies of its own.

The Christian Democrats, still discredited by the rampant corruption that marked former President Jose Napoleon Duarte's reign and lacking charismatic leadership, received 28 percent of the vote—a drop from 36 percent in 1989—and will have 26 deputies.

The big surprise was the Democratic Convergence winning 12 percent of the vote, tripling its 1989 showing and even edging out

## Arena's behavior in last month's election was hardly a convincing demonstration that irregularities and fraud are things of the past.

the Christian Democrats in the capital. The Convergence will have eight deputies, while the smaller UDN will have one. This will mark the first presence of the left in the assembly since the civil war began a decade ago.

Although it feels PCN and Arena fraud robbed it of several deputies, the Democratic Convergence is already looking ahead to the important 1994 elections, when both a new assembly and a new president will be elected. The Convergence's strong showing might allow it to lead the challenge to Arena by a broad center-left coalition that could include both the centrist Christian Democrats and the FMLN guerrillas.

However important the elections, they were but a sideshow to the U.N.-mediated peace talks that have moved the country closer to a negotiated solution to the decade-long civil war that has so far claimed 70,000 lives.

Both the Democratic Convergence and the FMLN agree that electoral reform must be put on the agenda of the negotiations. "After these elections, it's clear that the present electoral system doesn't function," said FMLN Commander Joaquin Villalobos while

being interviewed March 19 for the first time on the country's most popular morning talk show.

Now, with the elections over, attention is again focusing on the peace talks, which were stalled last November when U.N. Peruvian mediator Alvaro de Soto drew up a proposal to address the most difficult issue: the future of the 60,000-man Salvadoran military that has ruled the country for half a century. Although formally under civilian control, the military remains the country's most powerful and feared institution.

De Soto's proposal was to drastically reduce the army's size, abolish the security forces and the paramilitary civil defense and put the police under civilian control, although some question whether an Arena-controlled police force would be a giant step forward. His most controversial suggestion was to create a commission that would review the human-rights records of the 2,000-man officer corps. The army replied that it could do its own housekeeping.

But the army's luck started to ebb in November. As the U.S. proxy against the leftist guerrillas, the Salvadoran military was accustomed to getting what it wanted from Congress, despite its bad human-rights record. But that began to change following the army murder of six Jesuit priests and their helpers in 1989. The army was shocked when Congress withheld half of the usual military aid as punishment for the brutal murders. Congress failed to renew the aid when the guerrillas launched a mini-offensive last November. At that time, both the army and the Cristiani government appeared willing to reluctantly go along with the de Soto plan.

**Lucky George:** Soon after, both the army and the Bush administration got lucky. On January 2, the FMLN downed a U.S. Army helicopter and killed two injured crewmen, giving the administration the perfect opening to renew military aid, as well as send three A-37 jet fighter-bombers and six Vietnam-vintage Huey UH-1M helicopters to Cristiani.

Despite its official public support for the U.N. mediation, the State Department began to privately attack de Soto during background briefings to the press. One such officially "leaked" story assailing the mediator appeared in the *New York Times* on February 1, the same day a new negotiating session began in Mexico.

Not coincidentally, the Salvadoran government also hardened its position, demanding that military officers make up half the commission mandated to purge the army. Since then, the talks have stalled.

"Arena seems as triumphalist as ever," remarked one Western diplomat. "There's a complete lack of understanding in the party of the need to make concessions. There's an utter conviction in the government and the U.S. that the FMLN have to concede—that they're effectively beat," added the diplomat. "The government, the right, the army and even the Americans are believing their own propaganda again."

Unfortunately, for negotiations to work the U.S. must pressure the Salvadoran military. But the Bush administration remains ambivalent. Although many U.S. officials are critical of the military, "their hatred for the FMLN is so great they end up supporting the army," says one foreign analyst.

Arena is also making a serious mistake, adds a Latin American diplomat. "They see Bush's New World Order, the Pax Americana. They believe that communism is crumbling

Continued on page 10

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 3-9, 1991 9



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## El Salvador

Continued from page 9

around the world and that time is on their side. Why negotiate with the guerrillas if they will disappear in a year?"

But despite the "crisis of socialism," the FMLN guerrillas seem stronger now than they have in years, with their sophisticated surface-to-air missiles limiting the army's U.S.-supplied air power.

While the FMLN continues to evolve ideologically, with change occurring faster in some of the five guerrilla organizations than in others, senior commanders like Joaquin Villalobos have discarded such tenets of Marxist dogma as a single-party state. Villalobos' group, the Peoples Revolutionary Army (ERP), has abandoned past dreams of seizing power militarily and resigned itself to the realization that if it comes to power it will be electorally, and probably as part

of a coalition that might even include the centrist Christian Democrats. The revolutionary contribution it wants to make to history is the demilitarization of Salvadoran society, drastically reducing the power and influence traditionally enjoyed by the Salvadoran army.

But despite their desire to incorporate into the political system, they won't do that without substantial concessions—concessions the government appears presently unwilling to make in its triumphant frame of mind. If that's the case, the FMLN will probably once again step up the military pressure.

When the rebels briefly seized part of the posh Escalon neighborhood in a pre-election show of strength, they left behind a warning painted on the sidewalk in Day-Glo orange. "If it's war they want, then it's war they'll get. FMLN."

Chris Norton is *In These Times'* correspondent in El Salvador.

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**IF YOU CAN WALK  
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## Yugoslavia

Continued from page 8

without the mandate that he badly needs.

**Down but not out:** The key to setting Yugoslavia back on the track of reason still rests in Serbia. Milosevic has reached deep into his bag of dirty tricks and has come up empty. Still, the petty tyrant clings to his depleted power, and, although his options are limited, they are not exhausted. The question of the 90-percent ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo, Serbia's southern province, still has great emotional pull for the Serbs. It was Milosevic's heavy-handed repression of the Albanians that brought him to power, and he is certain to use Kosovo again in his moment of need. In southern Serbia, the autonomy campaign of the Sanjak Moslems is another prime target for provocation. And, as long as Croatia pushes toward independence, the knotty problem of the Serb minorities there will remain the country's most explosive issue.

With the possible exception of Slovenia, Yugoslavia's constituents cannot possibly break from the country without igniting civil war. A new federation or confederation, based on democratic principles and full respect for minority rights, is the only option for minimizing the threat of further bloodshed. However slow off the blocks, the republics' democracy movements are now in motion. Their success is instrumental to Yugoslavia's future.

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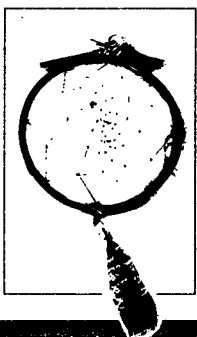
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By Ken Silverstein

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

**E**ARLY LAST MONTH, BRAZIL'S PRESIDENTIAL spokesman got tired of hearing complaints about his boss. "The people will commemorate [Fernando] Collor de Mello's first year in office on the street," Claudio Humberto Rosa e Silva told reporters. That anniversary came March 15, and, just as Rosa e Silva predicted, the people were out in force. But much to the spokesman's chagrin, they were not celebrating.

In the industrial suburbs that ring São Paulo, South America's largest city, tens of thousands of metalworkers called a one-day anti-Collor strike, forcing the local subsidiaries of Ford and Volkswagen to shut down. Smaller protests were held in other cities, including Brasília, the capital, where 4,000 people marched and cried out, "Collor, the people are in misery." Police troopers ensured that the demonstration did not head

## AUSTERITY

toward the presidential palace, lest it spoil a carefully arranged ceremony there.

While the 41-year-old conservative president has failed at "liquidating" inflation, bettering the lives of the "shirtless and shoeless" and pushing Brazil headfirst into the ranks of the First World—all major campaign promises—he has succeeded in uniting most of the country against him. A recent poll in the one of the country's leading newspapers, *Folha de São Paulo*, showed he was rated positively by only 23 percent of the population. The government's growing isolation was highlighted by a recent strategy meeting between former political enemies Mario Amato, head of the conservative São Paulo Federation of Industries, and socialist Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, whom Collor narrowly defeated in the 1989 election. During the campaign, Amato strongly backed Collor and warned that 800,000 businessmen would flee the country if da Silva won.

Such strange political alliances have arisen because Collor's free-market budget-cutting austerity policies have created the worst recession in many years. In 1990, Brazil's economic output plunged by 4.6 percent—the worst performance since 1947. Bankruptcies were up 112 percent. Some 2.5 million people lost their jobs. The wealthiest 5 percent of the population sharply increased their share of national income. Inflation—while down from the 5,000 percent annual figure racked up during former President José Sarney's last year in office—was more than 400 percent. Brazilians joke that Collor is taking his commitment to the "shirtless and shoeless" so seriously that at the end of his term there will be no other class left in the country. Economist Edmar Bacha says Collor's record thus far represents "one more step ... in the direction of the Fourth World instead of heading toward the First World as announced by the government."

**Living on the edge:** While everyone is angry about the economic disaster, the poor are bearing its brunt. The situation in Vila Malvinas, a shantytown built beneath a bridge and alongside a major avenue that leads out of Rio de Janeiro is typical. Founded a decade ago and named after the islands claimed by both Britain and Argentina, the shantytown was never a model neighborhood. Some 1,400 people live there in tiny scrap-wood shacks. Barefoot children sleep on the red earth that serves as both floor to homes and the community's street. Garbage accumulates everywhere, attracting

# Little hope for Brazil's 'shirtless and shoeless'

chickens, stray dogs and the huge rats that scurry openly when night falls.

Since last March, unemployment has hit the slum like a plague. Ana Maria de Sousa Lima's family recently moved to Vila Malvinas after her husband, Jorge, lost his post at a steel plant. Now Jorge washes cars, sells candies and does other odd jobs to earn enough money to feed the couple's three children. Ana Maria cleans homes for about \$10 a day. "If we find work during the day, we eat at night," she says over the roar of the passing traffic. "Prices keep going up while salaries go down. I sometimes don't even have money to buy rice anymore."

Next door is Sonia Regina de Souza Silva, mother of seven and wife of a newly unemployed janitor. Collor's rush to balance the country's budget led him to scrap a program that provided free milk for needy families. "We buy bread for breakfast when we have the money, but normally we go without," de Souza Silva says. "The worst part is that there is no sign that things are going to get better any time soon."

Dulcinea dos Santos lives with her mother and husband—one of the lucky ones who managed to hold onto his job. He works the graveyard shift at the nearby General Electric plant. There he earns the "minimum salary," which has been reduced to its lowest real level since being created 51 years ago and is now worth about \$70 per month. It is the same pay received by nearly half of Brazil's labor force. Leftist political parties have been pressuring the government to increase the minimum salary to the equivalent of \$100 per month—about 63 cents an hour—but officials say that is "economically unviable" and would destabilize austerity measures. "Our money is good for nothing," says dos Santos. "I go to the street to buy a few items and come back without a single centavo."

The family's income was cut to the bone

by Collor's decision to end three decades of "indexing," whereby wages automatically rose to cover inflation. Now workers must "freely negotiate" pay raises. With labor's bargaining power at its nadir due to the deepening economic downturn, purchasing power has plunged by an estimated 50 percent in the past year. Dos Santos' mother, like 13 million Brazilians, lives only on her retirement benefits. But because Collor vetoed a law that guaranteed the equivalent of one minimum salary per pension, she takes in only about \$35 a month.

**Recipe for disaster:** The economic disaster dates from Collor's first day in office, when he announced an emergency "shock" plan to beat inflation. Its centerpiece was an 18-month freeze on all individual and corporate bank savings accounts over \$1,200. Drastic but necessary medicine, Collor said, and the only people who would suffer were the few Brazilians who had their money temporarily blocked.

The president's measures created the recession that neoliberals insist is necessary to beat high inflation. In the plan's aftermath, industrial production ground to a halt and thousands of employees were fired or put on collective holiday. (In São Paulo, which was particularly hard hit, the downturn produced the biggest baby boom on record this January.)

But nothing else worked according to plan. The rich used connections and loopholes to get their money "unfrozen." Private estimates—including a study by the University of São Paulo—show that more than half the funds blocked last March have been retrieved and most of what remains frozen belongs to middle-class savers.

And the country's economy, dominated by monopolies and cartels, has not operated the way the Economics 101 textbooks said it would. "A recession won't control inflation here because big companies would prefer to

cut production, lay off workers and raise prices to maintain profit margins," said Rene Dreifuss, a prominent political scientist at the Federal Fluminense University. The result: the cost of living, which dipped briefly after the plan was announced, has been climbing steadily ever since. Inflation reached 22 percent in February, the highest rate since Collor took office.

That forced a new economic package, dubbed "Collor II," that featured a price freeze of unspecified duration—already being routinely ignored and selectively eased. It also jacked up public tariffs by as much as 81 percent and gave workers a raise of about 25 percent to be followed by a wage freeze until July.

The new plan has heightened union anger. Workers say the wage increase doesn't come close to covering past losses and now they are expected to keep quiet until midyear. "In the past, we had no expectations because we lived in a dictatorship," says Vicente Paulo da Silva, president of the São Bernardo do Campo Metalworkers Union, referring to the military regime that ruled the country between 1964 and 1985. "But this government was elected by the direct vote, and for that reason the salary squeeze hurts more."

**Backward in every sense:** The basic problem is that Collor wants to beat inflation and stimulate economic growth without disturbing Brazil's rich, who live even more comfortably than their First World counterparts. University of Brasília political scientist David Fleischer calls the corporate class "greedy"—a tremendous understatement since wages here are among the lowest in the world while profit margins are among the highest. He says the government is largely to blame for the economic mess because it talks tough with the private sector but fails to crack down. "Collor doesn't have the political guts to take them on," Fleischer says. "He could force them to reduce their profit margins by auditing their books, arresting a few price gougers and taking other promised actions." Congressman José Serra, of the center-left Brazilian Social Democracy Party, says Brazil—rich in raw materials and human resources—has no economic problems. "We have a political problem," he says. "The elite are backward in every sense, politically, culturally and intellectually."

Many observers are already predicting the rapid demise of Collor II. Fleischer believes the failure of four anti-inflation packages in the past five years—and the government's incompetence—has "immunized" the public. "Brazilians are like a cat that's been scalded," he says. "They've seen this same film many times, and it always ends the same way."

Indeed, hopeful signs are hard to find. Opposition parties boast a growing popularity and are trying to ease the recession's impact on the poor. But leftists are still attempting to redefine socialism in the aftermath of the fall of Eastern Europe's communist governments and have yet to present a coherent alternative to Collor's policies. The public is angry but apathetic. Unions and community organizations report a growing sense of despair among the lower classes.

Meanwhile, more and more refugees from Collor's economic measures are looking for a place to start over. "There's no more room here," says Ana Maria at Vila Malvinas. "But a few families are camped out by the subway station and another group's just up ahead, right off the avenue."

Ken Silverstein is a journalist based in Rio de Janeiro.

Dulcinea dos Santos and her mother live in a shantytown just outside Rio de Janeiro.



Altamiro Nunes



By Jim McNeill

**A**mericans may never know precisely what happened during the Gulf war. But as information currently available in the public record is pieced together, answers to nagging questions—ranging from why the war was fought to how it was won—begin to emerge.

In addition, as previously concealed diplomatic initiatives are uncovered and data from the battlefield is reassessed, evidence is surfacing that undermines the conventional wisdom that paved the way for the Gulf conflict.

That wisdom, sometimes fabricated by the Bush administration, was the basis for myths about American policy that, if left uncorrected, may again lead the U.S. into war. The following 10 myths about the Gulf war can now be debunked.

**Until his army was overrun by allied ground forces, Saddam Hussein never showed any willingness to withdraw peacefully from Kuwait.**

Contrary to the oft-repeated Bush administration claim that Hussein demonstrated "no signs of flexibility" during the Gulf crisis, several reports released during and after the crisis indicate that on at least six occasions, Hussein was prepared to withdraw peacefully from Kuwait.

A March 5 *Village Voice* story by Michael Emery reported that Iraq's August 2 invasion of Kuwait, though reprehensible, was a temporary measure designed to secure monies previously promised to Iraq by the Kuwaitis. In an interview with Emery, Jordan's King Hussein said Saddam Hussein, when contacted on the day of the invasion, claimed, "I will withdraw [from Kuwait]; it is a matter of days, perhaps weeks."

King Hussein, a key participant in the intensive Arab negotiations following the invasion, said Saddam Hussein had agreed to send a representative to discuss Iraq's withdrawal to an August 5 emergency summit in Jidda, Saudi Arabia.

But plans for the summit dissolved on August 3, when Arab foreign ministers issued a surprisingly harsh denunciation of Saddam Hussein. According to Emery's sources, Egypt led the drive to denounce the Iraqi leader's actions. A diplomat quoted by Emery said, "There was a general knowledge that the Americans and the British were behind the Egyptian actions."

Another report, released in the German newsweekly *Der Spiegel* on March 18, said that Saddam Hussein transmitted a peace proposal to George Bush on August 8, after the U.S. sent troops to Saudi Arabia. The proposal, which offered an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait in exchange for the disputed Rumaila oil fields and Kuwaiti concessions on oil pricing, made no linkage to the Palestinian question.

Later indications of Iraqi flexibility were reported in a January 3 *New York Newsday* story that outlined prospects for the January 9 meeting between Secretary of State James Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz. *Newsday* quoted a State Department official who said the Iraqi proposals he had seen represented a "serious pre-negotiation position." That same day, the *New York Times* reported that Yasir Arafat and Saddam Hussein were prepared to drop their demand for "linkage" as long as the Palestinian question was addressed at a later date.

12 IN THESE TIMES APRIL 3-9, 1991

# THE BIG TEN GULF MYTHS



The final effort to avert war, the January 13 meeting between U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and President Hussein, was characterized by Perez de Cuellar as a dismal failure. But a transcript of the meeting, released on February 9 by the Iraqis, showed Saddam Hussein's willingness to discuss Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. (The U.N. refused to release a copy of the transcript but did not challenge the authenticity of the Iraqi document.)

According to the transcript, Hussein apparently pointed to a map of Kuwait and asked the secretary-general, "Where should Iraq withdraw to?" He also told Perez de Cuellar that he had ordered a partial withdrawal from

Kuwait in early August but that he had reversed the decision when American troops arrived in Saudi Arabia.

On February 15, Iraq again showed flexibility when Baghdad Radio announced that Iraq was offering a "conditional" withdrawal from Kuwait. By February 21, the Iraqis had agreed to the more stringent Soviet peace proposal, which established a specific timetable for the Iraqi pullout. Josh Epstein, a military analyst at the Brookings Institution, describes the Iraqi acceptance of the Soviet proposal as "an obvious sign that the Iraqis were caving in to the American stance."

**Although sustained sanctions might have crippled the Iraqi economy, they**

would have had little effect on the Iraqi war machine.

On December 3 of last year, Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, implied that delaying military action against Iraq would allow it to strengthen its army. Cheney said that relying exclusively on sanctions would allow Hussein to continue "his efforts to improve his weapons arsenal. [While we wait] he continues to work to see if he can acquire more weapons of mass destruction."

Just two days later, however, CIA Director William Webster, testifying before the same House committee, said U.N. sanctions were blocking 90 percent of Iraqi imports and 97 percent of its exports. By the spring, Webster predicted, Iraq would have exhausted its foreign-currency reserves, "leaving it little cash with which to entice potential sanction-busters."

Although the CIA director acknowledged that the Iraqi military could have weathered sanctions "for as long as nine months," he said the air force would have been compromised within three to six months and that shortages of "various critical lubricants" would eventually disable ground units.

Cheney's questions about the advisability of a prolonged allied blockade seem also to have been answered by Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf at a November 28 press conference. "I really don't think there is ever going to come a time when time is on the side of Iraq as long as sanctions are in effect. ... If the alternative to dying is sitting out in the sun for another summer, that's not a bad alternative."

**Iraqi forces, after being softened by relentless allied air attacks, finally shattered under the weight of a masterful allied ground assault.**

Undeniably, Iraqi forces were devastated by unrelenting allied air attacks. But as uncensored information begins to flow back about the ground war, it now appears that the U.S. military's most stunning victory was won not on the battlefields of Iraq and Kuwait but in the briefing rooms of Riyadh and Washington.

Some U.S. military experts and policy analysts are challenging the official account of the coalition's military victory. They maintain that Iraqi troops were not forced from defensive positions and then routed by allied ground forces. Instead, they claim, by the time the allies launched the ground offensive on February 23, Iraqi commanders had already ordered the withdrawal from Kuwait.

On March 11, the *Washington Post* confirmed that "tens of thousands of Iraqi troops in and around Kuwait City had begun to pull away more than 36 hours before allied forces reached the capital [on February 26]."

According to the *Post*, the February 25 and 26 air attack on Iraqi units heading north from Kuwait City continued full force, even after Baghdad Radio had announced at 2 a.m. on February 26 that Iraqi troops were withdrawing from Kuwait. The *Post* said that the U.S. military command, "by playing down evidence that Iraqi troops were actually leaving Kuwait ... offered [journalists] a carefully drawn, and in some senses inaccurate, picture of the fast-changing battlefield."

John Pike, director of the space policy project at the Federation of American Scientists, says the *Post* report and other published reports raise questions about the veracity of the official story. "The predominant belief that the U.S. won a cataclysmic victory by virtue of advanced technology just doesn't account for [allied] casualties being this



light," he says.

"Before the war began," he continues, "the administration's nightmare scenario was that Hussein would withdraw his army unscathed at the last moment. That's what was happening. When U.S. commanders realized this, they simply tried to catch as many fleeing Iraqi tanks as they could. I think the U.S. had a political interest in showing that we had won a decisive military victory."

Instead of mounting a serious defense against the allied ground attack, Pike believes Iraq left inferior front-line units in place to be captured, thereby slowing the allied advance and allowing elite Iraqi troops to return to Iraq intact. In fact, Iraqi defenses were much weaker than the allies anticipated. Recent U.S. intelligence reports indicate Iraq had only 250,000 troops in the Kuwaiti theater—far fewer than the 540,000 estimated during the war. And a March 4 *New York Times* story said Iraq's first-line defenses—expected to be a fearsome array of tank traps, land mines and crisscrossing zones of fire—were less "treacherous [than] the allies had feared."

Pike believes—based on his readings of the public record—that the Iraqi order to withdraw was given on February 21, just after Hussein accepted the Soviet peace proposal. Within hours of that agreement, Iraqi troops began detonating hundreds of Kuwaiti oil wells in addition to the 50 wells already burning. Pike argues that the wells were lit not only to carry out Hussein's scorched-earth policy but also to provide cover for retreating Iraqi forces.

#### **Iraqi troops pulled Kuwaiti babies from incubators.**

This widely circulated myth, reported by Amnesty International, was repeatedly cited by the Bush administration to prove the unparalleled depravity of Iraqi forces.

But as early as December, the story began to unravel. That month, the Kuwaiti Red Crescent doctor who allegedly witnessed the incident began hedging on his story. Later, other alleged witnesses altered or retracted their accounts.

Then on March 15, ABC News reported that Dr. Mohammed Matar, director of Kuwait's primary health-care system, said the Kuwaiti infants died because, "to tell the truth, there was no service, no nurses to take care of [them]." His wife, Dr. Fayeza Youssef, who ran the maternity hospital, described the alleged Iraqi atrocity as "propaganda."

#### **Iraq's policies of environmental terrorism were solely responsible for the environmental devastation in the Gulf region.**

Perhaps the most widely televised casualties of the Gulf war were the oil-soaked cormorants struggling in the slick that oozed down the Saudi coast. The film of the pathetic water fowl presented a powerful image of Iraqi environmental terrorism.

But the cormorants that first appeared on American TV screens were victims of a spill from Saudi facilities damaged—possibly by allied artillery—during the battle of Khafji.

In fact, the first charges of "environmental terrorism" were lodged against the U.S. by Baghdad Radio on January 24. The charges—that U.S. planes had bombed two Iraqi tankers anchored off Kuwait—received little notice. In a page 3 story, the *Wall Street Journal* reported, without mentioning the Iraqi charges, that on January 24, "U.S. planes disabled an Iraqi tanker that U.S. officers said had been serving as a spy ship," and that "the attack caused a small oil slick in the Persian Gulf."

The next day, however, Gen. Schwarzkopf

garnered international headlines when he accused the Iraqis of intentionally dumping millions of gallons of crude oil into the Gulf from Kuwait's Sea Island terminal, a tanker-loading platform about 10 miles off the Kuwaiti coast. Although the Iraqis steadfastly denied the general's claim, Eric Brus, executive editor of *Golob's Oil Pollution Bulletin*, says that the "Iraqis were undoubtedly responsible for most of the oil spilled into the Gulf."

But they were not solely responsible for the ecological damage in the Gulf region. In addition to its January 24 strike against the Iraqi tanker, allied bombing of Iraqi oil facilities at Mina al-Bakr in late January may have caused the slick that seeped into the Gulf from that facility.

And on February 6, the *Boston Globe*, citing information from refugees fleeing Kuwait, reported that "allied bombing of oil refineries and installations [in Kuwait] had caused rain to turn black, created clouds of soot and dust and caused multiple refinery fires."

The only good environmental news to come out of this conflict has been the gradual reduction in the estimates of the amount of oil spilled into the Gulf. Initially, the allies estimated that as many as 11 million barrels of oil had entered the Gulf, far exceeding the world's worst previous spill of 4.3 million barrels from the Gulf of Mexico's Ixtoc drilling platform in 1979.

**A comprehensive survey of Iraq's nuclear-weapons program shows Iraq was many years away from developing usable nuclear weapons.**

By mid-February, however, the Saudi government had revised its estimates downward, claiming that the slick contained between 500,000 to 3 million barrels of oil. Most reporters took the estimates at face value. Little noticed was a February 17 *Washington Post* report quoting diplomatic sources in Riyadh who said that the Saudi government might be falsely downplaying "the extent and impact of the spill." Such a tactic would enable the Saudis to limit the size of the government's cleanup efforts, thereby reducing costs.

Although there is currently no way to assess the accuracy of the Saudi estimates, a U.S. government team sent to investigate the spill is compiling a report that could provide independent verification of the spill's size. But when the U.S. team leader was asked at an early March oil-spill conference in San Diego when the report would be available, he replied that the report will likely not be publicly released.

One attendee at the San Diego conference called the move "highly unusual" and said the action may be an attempt to shield the Saudis from potentially embarrassing disclosures. Eric Anderson, an analyst who has monitored the spill for Applied Science Associates of Narragansett, Rhode Island, said that "the Saudi government does not seem to be responding aggressively to the spill."

In addition to the spill in the Persian Gulf, the allied attack on more than 15 Iraqi chemical and nuclear facilities also seems certain to harm the Gulf region's environment, despite Schwarzkopf's claim that he was "99.9

percent" certain that the attacks had caused no ecological harm. With modern combatants employing toxic weapons—the depleted uranium shells in the American arsenal are one example (see *In These Times*, March 20)—against such targets as chemical, petrochemical and nuclear facilities, contemporary warfare seems almost certain to cause long-term environmental damage.

#### **The Iraqis were just months away from perfecting a nuclear weapon.**

On November 16, with public support for Operation Desert Shield slipping after President Bush's massive post-election troop deployment, the *Los Angeles Times* published a poll indicating that Americans, while not favoring offensive action to safeguard Gulf oil, would support a war to destroy Iraq's nuclear program. By November 22, the president was warning a divided nation that measuring Iraq's "atomic program in years may be seriously underestimating the reality of that situation and the gravity of the threat."

In fact, a comprehensive survey of Iraq's nuclear-weapons program in the March *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* shows "Iraq was many years away from developing usable nuclear weapons."

But the U.S. military chose to attack all of Iraq's major nuclear-research facilities, including the Tuwaitha reactor complex 25 miles south of Baghdad. The mid-January bombing of Tuwaitha was the first attack ever against an operational nuclear reactor. According to the *Bulletin*, the two small research reactors at Tuwaitha "were unconnected to Iraq's bomb program."

By bombing Tuwaitha, the U.S. achieved a small propaganda victory at home but defeated years of progress in international nuclear-arms control. In December of last year, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution urging against such attacks. And in January, India and Pakistan, once the most belligerent of nuclear-armed nations, agreed to refrain from attacking one another's nuclear facilities.

If the U.S. had been serious about deterring Iraq's nuclear capability, the *Bulletin* argued, the U.S. would long ago have refused "to extend [high-tech] trading privileges to a country pursuing a bomb program." But, according to the *Bulletin*, the Reagan and Bush administrations over the last five years "approved the sale to Iraq of \$1.5 billion worth of computers, electronic equipment and machine tools which could be used in its nuclear, chemical and ballistic missile programs."

#### **U.S. military censorship was strict but fair.**

During the Gulf war, military censors not only controlled access to the front but kept a rein on journalists beyond the battlefield as well.

On February 11, the *Washington Post* reported that *New York Times* correspondent Chris Hedges was detained by U.S. military authorities on February 10 after interviewing shopkeepers in Saudi Arabia. Hedges was held for two hours and sent back to his hotel without his press credentials. The *Post* article said reporters from the Associated Press, the BBC and other media received similar treatment.

Not only did the U.S. military deny reporters access to a wide variety of sources but often the information that military censors released was either misleading or incorrect. The controversy surrounding the Iraqi infant-formula factory bombed by the allies on January 22 was only the most obvious case in point. The military's repeated assertion

that the factory was a chemical-weapons plant was contradicted by CNN reporter Peter Arnett's firsthand observation of the facility.

According to the March 18 *Newsweek*, six Iraqi helicopters that reportedly defected to the allies in late January were actually American choppers returning from a reconnaissance mission inside Iraq. In its March 5 issue, *Time* magazine noted that in early February the CIA planted false reports that 60 Iraqi tanks had defected to allied forces.

According to the February 28 *Wall Street Journal*, Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams explained such discrepancies in military press accounts by saying, "We were not trying to deceive the press. We were trying to fool Saddam Hussein."

#### **Hussein possessed a vast stockpile of "terrorist weapons" that he was prepared to use against U.S. forces.**

In the six-month runup to the Gulf war, Americans were treated to a fearsome survey of Iraq's arsenal. The U.S. press regularly detailed the chemical, biological and nuclear capabilities of the "world's fourth-largest army." Only after the war did Americans learn that Iraq lacked the technology needed to effectively deploy those weapons against allied troops.

According to the March 4 *New York Times*, "captured Iraqi prisoners said most of the units had inadequate chemical-protection equipment—in some cases not even gas masks—and presumably feared allied retaliation if they used nerve gases against coalition forces." On March 18, *Newsweek* reported that "not a single [Iraqi] chemical weapon has been found" in the Kuwaiti theater. Iraq's nuclear threat, of course, never existed.

In addition to conjecture over Hussein's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, the media speculated that Iraq possessed exotic fuel-air explosives (FAEs). An FAE is a powerful bomb that spreads a highly inflammable mist through a wide area that it then ignites. A January 24 *New York Times* article warned that "Hussein might be planning to use [a] ... horrific weapon, never before employed in combat, known as the fuel-air bomb." Here the *Times* misstated one crucial detail about this "horrific weapon." In fact, the fuel-air bomb had been used in combat—by the U.S. during the Vietnam War.

If Iraq did have FAEs, it chose not to use them in the Gulf war. The U.S., however, did deploy them. On February 6, as the air war dragged on and military spokesmen warned Americans to prepare for "extended combat," the *Boston Globe* reported that "fuel-air bombs may have been dropped over Iraq by allied forces last weekend." Then on February 7, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that journalists touring a U.S. air base in the Gulf spotted FAEs stockpiled on the tarmac. On February 11, a U.S. military spokesman admitted to pool reporters that the allies were in fact dropping FAEs on Iraqi ground forces.

On February 16, the *New York Times* reported that the U.S.' largest FAE, the 15,000-pound BLU-82/B, was being dropped on Iraqi targets. A report on anti-personnel weapons from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute says the BLU-82/B "produces a concussive blast greater than that of the smallest nuclear devices."

According to the *New York Times*, the FAEs "cleared paths through minefields and depleted Iraqi morale." Of course, they not only depleted troop morale but also depleted troop numbers.

#### **During the precision bombing of**

*Continued on page 22*

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 3-9, 1991 13



# EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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CAR & DRIVER

## Energy and the betrayal of the national interest

The Bush administration's energy strategy, released on February 20, followed the announcement of its transportation plan by one week. Taken together, these proposals provide clear evidence that our "environmental president" is more interested in subsidizing the oil and auto companies than he is in protecting the environment or in lessening our dependence on imported oil.

We can reduce our need for foreign oil by increasing the energy efficiency of our means of transportation, our homes and our factories, and by developing alternative and renewable energy sources. Or, we can continue to squander energy while hoping to reduce dependency on imports by encouraging the exploitation of all possible sources of oil, coal and nuclear power.

The first alternative serves the national interest in several ways. And, as Energy Secretary James D. Watkins admitted in April of last year, it was the clear choice of those testifying at public energy hearings around the country over a period of 18 months. Conserving energy through increased efficiency would not only save oil but would also cut air pollution and reduce energy costs to consumers and industry, thereby increasing the productivity of the American economy. Similarly, the development of alternative fuels, especially solar energy, would enable us to begin phasing out dependence on oil and protect against the increasingly destructive exploitation of our natural environment.

Even so, the administration has chosen the second approach. The need for conservation barely appears in the Bush plan, which calls for exploration and drilling for oil in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and along the continental shelf off California's coast. As Worldwatch Institute Vice President Christopher Flavin says, "They've got proposals to drill in virtually every pristine area you can think of. But when it comes to efficiency, the most they can think of is possibly to put energy-efficiency labels on light bulbs."

Bush's transportation program subsidizes oil companies and encourages increased production. While offering no growth for public

transit, it calls for spending \$87.7 billion over the next five years on highway repairs and expansion, including the creation of a new 150,000-mile National Highway System. The administration plan would cut federal matching funds for mass transit from 80 percent to 60 percent. This would encourage financially strapped states to opt instead for highway funds that provide a higher proportion of federal money. And the administration would end federal operating subsidies for public transit in all areas with more than 1 million people, which would lead to further deterioration of urban and inter-urban rail and bus systems. Furthermore, Bush would reward those states whose drivers use the most fuel by basing highway-subsidy formulas on a state's fuel consumption rather than its total highway mileage.

In Congress there is some talk about mandating a 40 percent increase in fuel efficiency by the year 2000, and environmentalists are dead set against drilling in the Alaska wildlife refuge. But there is no coherent opposition to the administration plan, only a general fear that with Bush riding a wave of popularity in the wake of the Gulf war, a veto of such proposals would be impossible to overcome.

In any case, even if these two exceptions to administration plans were enacted it would make little difference. Bush's overall approach is not only a blatantly corrupt exercise of corporate favoritism but, more importantly, it is a dangerously short-sighted policy that can only accelerate the decline of American industry, our standard of living and the quality of our lives. In every respect, administration plans go in the wrong direction.

While Japan has achieved double our level of energy efficiency, Bush barely tips his hat in that direction. While a German firm has bought up the last of the American photovoltaic companies, the administration looks the other way. While every other industrialized nation is investing in new generations of public transit, our government increases our reliance on automobiles.

This is more than just a question of our dependency on foreign oil, although even there administration policy promises only disaster. Energy production, and transportation, which is the single greatest consumer of energy in this country, are the foundations on which our economy stands. Catering to the short-term profitability of oil and auto corporations at the expense of our national interest, as George Bush is doing, is to betray the public trust invested in the presidency.

*In These Times* believes that to guarantee our life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, Americans must take greater control over our nation's basic economic and foreign policy decisions. We believe in a socialism that fulfills rather than subverts the promise of American democracy, where social needs and rationality, not corporate profit and greed, are the operative principles. Our pages are open to a wide range of views, socialist and nonsocialist, liberal and conservative. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

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# LETTERS

## Parenti redux

**I**N A LETTER (FEB. 20), I RAISED WHAT I FELT WERE some troubling questions about the prospect of Lithuanian independence. I noted that the president of Lithuania is the son of the pre-war president, who was a Nazi collaborator; that the rights of minorities in Lithuania were in jeopardy; that the few gains women had won were likely to be rolled back; that an "independent" Lithuania was created in 1918 on the bayonets of a terrorist and reactionary White Guard army supported by British imperialists; and that today's Lithuanian separatists are mostly right-wing supporters of U.S. imperialist policies. I concluded by asking: "Should not these things give us pause when advocating Lithuanian separatism?"

I was disappointed and disgusted to read the "Editor's note" that was tagged onto my letter accusing me of being "Bush's political mirror image and his moral equivalent." No matter how much you might dislike the questions I am trying to raise, it is a rather foul polemic to equate me morally with the likes of George Bush, who has perpetuated murderous military assaults on a number of nations, from El Salvador to Panama to Iraq.

You misrepresented my concerns regarding the president of Lithuania. I would not deny Lithuanians their independence because Landbergis' father was pro-Nazi. My hesitations about Landbergis have to do with the way he wishes to emulate some of his father's worst policies. Get it right before engaging in your smirky comparisons to Stalin.

Incidentally, I am not even sure I would deny Lithuanians their independence, but I certainly would like some things cleared up before joining the mainstream chorus the way you seem to have done on this issue.

You proclaim your dedication to self-determination, so long as the independent governments "don't do violence to the rights of others in the process." But that is exactly the question I raised about Lithuania, where minorities are going to be denied their citizenship rights and reduced to immigrant status. And that is exactly the question you did not answer. One might argue that it is you who suffers from moral relativism, being selectively concerned about minority rights in some countries but not in others, where the same issue may be less popular.

Michael Parenti  
Washington, D.C.

## Heaping distinctions

**I**AM WRITING TO PROTEST YOUR RECENT ATTACK on distinguished author Michael Parenti (Letters, Feb. 20). Parenti brought up some very disturbing facts regarding the anti-democratic and reactionary tendencies in Lithuania today and in its pre-World War II history. If it is true that land in Lithuania may be given back to rich privileged owners, that minority rights and women's benefits are threatened, that those who oppose separation are denied access to the press, and that Lithuanian separatists are strong supporters of Bush's policies, then why should not these facts be brought out into the open? They are not debated in the mainstream media, but what is your excuse for attacking someone such as Parenti, who wants to bring them up for consideration

in your alternative publication?

You congratulate yourself for your moral consistency in that you oppose both Reagan's war against Nicaragua and the Soviet suppression of Lithuanian separatism. Your consistency seems to rest on a dedication to an abstract principle: support self-determination wherever it may arise. But Parenti and others on the left are not without moral principles; they just have different ones from yours. They support the struggles for self-determination that bring democratic gains to the mass of the people. And they call into question the ones that support reactionary forces and strengthen the hands of imperialists like Reagan and Bush.

Parenti's agenda has a social and class content; yours seems to have no content just form. You should keep this distinction in mind before you rush forth and heap moralistic abuse on others on the left.

Peggy Noton  
Petaluma, Calif.

**Editor's note:** The answer to the question that Michael Parenti raised that we did not reply to seemed obvious to us, but here goes: The rights of ethnic minorities in an independent Lithuania seem to be in no greater danger than they are now with Lithuania incorporated into the Soviet Union. A large part of the turmoil now going on in that country is the result of minorities being treated as second-class citizens for the past 70 years. We see no reason to expect worse from a free Lithuania, only a change in who gets treated badly.

Peggy Noton is correct: we do have different principles than Michael Parenti. However, we do not think that the democratic principle of self-determination is abstract. We differ with those who think they have the right to determine who deserves independence and who does not. Once you have taken that position, differences with the Bush administration on who should be allowed to escape from imperial domination become simply a matter of opinion about the nature of the country seeking to become independent.

Our position is that Lithuanians are the ones who should decide whether or not to have their own nation. The time to criticize their government or politics is after they have been granted the same right we demand for other colonized peoples. To arrogate to himself the right to decide who is worthy of independence and who is simply to mimic the imperialist mindset Parenti claims to oppose.

As for the "class content" of Parenti's agenda, one wonders what it is. Is it the working class that the Soviet hardline bureaucrats represent? Are they preferable to what may be an equally unpalatable rul-

ing class in a free Lithuania? Does keeping Lithuania as an unwilling Soviet republic strengthen the working class? If so, how? Are the 90 percent of Lithuanians who want independence dupes of a fascist ruling class, and, if so, do they need to be protected by Parenti? Surely they have suffered enough under a malevolent paternalism. Even if Parenti's is more benevolently motivated, the Lithuanians deserve the right to make their own mistakes.

## Unconfirmed

**J**OHAN B. JUDIS HAS ONCE AGAIN COME IN FOR CRITICISM from readers, some of whom threaten to withdraw their support because of his supposed lack of radicalism. Better, some seem to think, that he write in the mainstream press.

But do we really read *In These Times* only to have our prejudices confirmed? Is the world really so black and white? Is it not good for us to know that one of our own is attempting, again and again, weekly, to think critically about the world as it is—and not about the world as we might want it to be?

If Judis—and others of his critically realist ilk—were not to be read in *In These Times*, I would find myself no doubt in the position of those who threaten to withdraw their support—save that I would not threaten, since *ITT* would have joined the sects and would be interested only in confirming its own prejudices.

In short, a vote of support for Judis.

Dick Howard  
Port Jefferson, N.Y.

## Turnabout

**O**N THE COVER OF *LIFE* MAGAZINE OF MAY 15, 1948, there's a picture of a man in a military uniform with an Arabic headdress, sitting astride a camel. This man, we were informed, was Gen. John "Glub" Pasha, a British general and head of the Arab Legion, a British mercenary army financed by a grant from the crown of \$8 million a year. We were further informed that this was the finest fighting force in the Middle East. It was this British mercenary army that attacked Israel at its inception in a last-ditch attempt of British imperialism to retain its League Of Nations-mandated territory of Palestine.

However, the British were going against the tide of history, for with the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Henry Luce, the publisher of *Time*, *Life* and *Fortune* magazines, proclaimed that this was the American Century, and that America was going to rule the world. But the U.S. might just need a little help in the Middle East, where the oil wells were, unfortunately, in Arab hands.

President Harry S. Truman had the answer, a Jewish state armed to the teeth by the U.S. to play policeman over the Arab world. And so a devastated Soviet Union had to give in on its wish to have Palestine become a binational state, and the U.N. resolution of 1947 gave the one-third Jewish minority two-thirds of the land of Palestine. Thus, even before the formal birthdate of May 15, 1948, the new Jewish state about to come into being faced a population problem of not being as Jewish as it would like to be, and it came upon the not-so-novel solution of getting rid of some of the Arabs. This it began to do with a vengeance on April 9, 1948, when 254 women, children and old men were killed and thrown down a well in a little Arab village called Deir Yassin. The men were away working in the fields. Two terrorist groups were mainly responsible, Menachem Begin's Irgun Zvai Leumi, or "freedom fighters," and Yitzhak Shamir's Stern Gang.

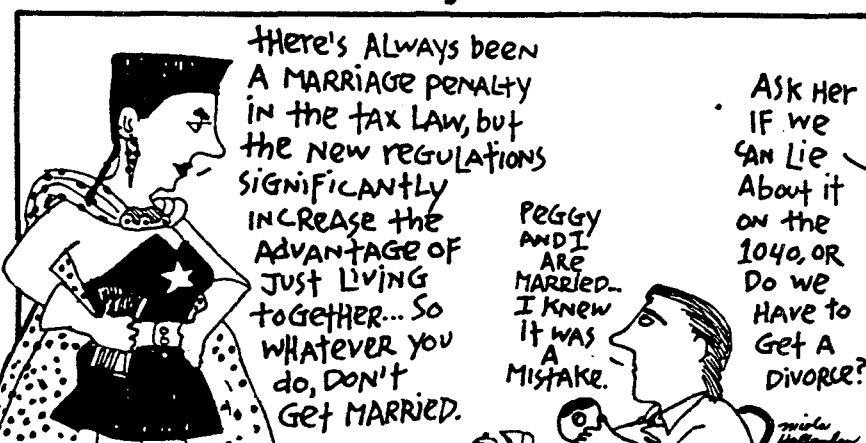
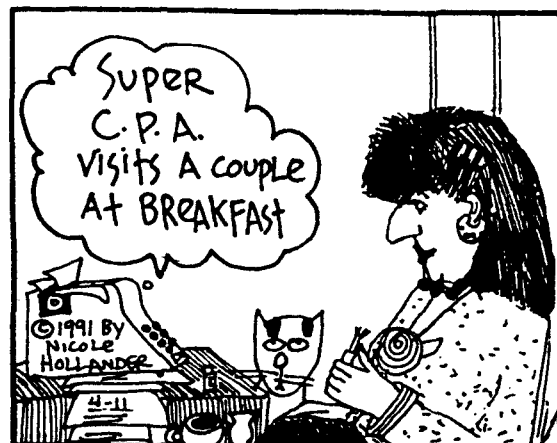
Horrible as this massacre was, 254 Arabs out of 800,000 seems a small number until you learn that the calculated savagery of this massacre was cunningly and carefully advertised among the whole 800,000 and resulted in a "maddened, uncontrollable stampede."

Arthur Koestler wrote that this "bloodbath ... was the psychologically decisive factor in the spectacular exodus of Arab refugees." And Jewish scholar Alfred M. Lilienthal wrote of it in great detail in his *The Zionist Connection II*. In the June 1967 "six-day war," the savagery of Deir Yassin was repeated on a mass scale in Egypt, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, but it included more modern delights such as napalm and white phosphorous. U.N. resolutions ordering Israel to give back the occupied Arab lands showered down like the gentle rain from heaven—but to no avail. Not only did its great friend and patron the U.S. not threaten it with any retribution but, on the contrary, rewarded it every year with \$4 billion of the American taxpayers' money, which Israel spread so generously around the American Congress that candidates vied with each other for the privilege of being the senator or representative from Tel Aviv.

Though I am Jewish, please forgive me for not shedding a tear when an occasional Iraqi Scud missile manages to get by our American Patriot missiles and give those "brave Israelis" a very slight taste of what they have been dishing out to the Arabs since 1948. Perhaps they might begin to have second thoughts about trading even a few of their valuable lives in exchange for all those worthless Arab lives.

Harold Heller  
Mill Valley, Calif.

## SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander



By Paul Rogat Loeb

**I**N "STRUGGLING FOR HEARTS AND MINDS of Americans" (ITT, March 20), Stephen Slade rightly suggests that we have a responsibility to challenge the notion of a noble and costless victory in the Gulf war. He raises tactical questions about the peace movement's slow response to the initial deployments, its excessive focus on potential U.S. casualties and overdependence on media explanations for the war. But he doesn't explain how we can make our voices heard by an American public flush with the pride of victory.

When the fighting began, many of us hoped to draw attention to our views through marches and rallies. Some were truly massive. Hundreds of thousands marched in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Los Angeles on January 26. Yet even those mobilizations were barely covered by the media or were dismissed with condescending stereotypes. Most Americans saw us as indulgent, obstructive and marginal.

How, in this situation, to have our views heard?

We might follow the lead of democrats in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. They built the intellectual foundations of their movement around the need to reinvent what they called "civil society," that web of associations and communities that exists outside the control of the state and the media. Here in America, we have always had these institutions aplenty, from churches and unions to the PTA, the YMCA and the Lions Clubs. But these groups rarely chal-

## Desperately seeking enlistment for peace

lenge government policy, and the war was too brief and we were too busy trying to mobilize in the streets to engage them. We can call on them now, however, to discuss the war's roots and implications.

Even those who endorsed the decision to fight may be more willing than we think to examine the war's roots and costs. My next-door neighbor, a Presbyterian minister, told me recently that President Bush may have had no choice but to fight. Yet he agreed it would be a tragedy if the quick and easy victory tempted the U.S. into future military interventions. His church needed to address alternatives to global violence, he said.

For a local peace community to organize a 1,000-person demonstration against the kinds of future interventions Slade describes might be useful. But it would be far more effective to use the same energy to arrange 25 discussions in churches, schools, community centers and neighborhoods. People need to examine their doubts about U.S. actions past and present. They are much more likely to do so in such discussions than by watching anonymous sign-carriers on TV.

**A broad base:** In the early '80s, at the height of the Reagan era, the nuclear-freeze campaigns grew dramatically through a

similar organizing strategy. In Florence, S.C., a small town's peace efforts began when a single Baptist preacher called a biologist who'd written a letter to the local paper opposing the MX missile. The two met, enlisted several others, then chipped in to buy the Physicians for Social Responsibility film *The Last Epidemic*.

Calling friends, neighbors and colleagues, they explained, "There's going to be a nuclear film shown at the Baptist church. Sure, think you all would enjoy seeing it." They took *The Last Epidemic* to schools and churches, garden clubs, community centers, the PTA, the Rotary Club, the Young Nurses Association and any other community institutions they could find. The subsequent discussions and marches created an educated base where none had existed before.

The freeze campaigns, which tapped into immediate fears for survival, had the strengths and weaknesses of ducking major questions of power. But efforts against intervention in Central America raised more profound questions about our country's relationship to others. We did this largely through the parade of mainstream Americans who went down to see for themselves the truth or falsehood of our government's claims and then returned to describe to friends and neighbors what they had learned. Because they spoke from within existing institutions and communities, their conclusions could not casually be dismissed.

These movements led thousands to anti-war activity and helped create a far broader potential base to challenge America's role as global policeman. Even after the Gulf war began, major churches and unions took stands unprecedented until the very last years of the Vietnam War.

We need to reach out to those who marched with us when they believed a choice of peace was still possible. And to enlist them in a vision that holds the Bush administration accountable for its own rhetoric of self-determination, opposition to dictators and respect for United Nations mandates.

Polls suggest that popular sentiment may be more receptive to our appeals than appearances would indicate. In a *Times Mirror* survey shortly before the ground war began, 77 percent of respondents backed Bush's policies. But an almost equal number feared that many Iraqi civilians might be killed, anticipating the massive death tolls only now beginning to trickle in. They worried as well that U.S. troops would be bogged down in the Middle East for years to come, which now seems increasingly likely. They feared our economy was far less solid than our armaments—and that whatever our military successes, we still might not prosper in peace.

**Sympathetic friends:** It's tempting for us to huddle together with others of like mind, bemoaning how America's longstanding imperial tendencies will now only intensify, or simply to march in defiance, as radical shock troops willing to bear any sacrifice.

But we can't afford this isolation. For outreach to work, we must take seriously both

our existing links to American civic life and the value of new ties we can build in the process.

Are sympathetic friends involved in local block associations, churches, environmental groups, Democratic clubs or even Chambers of Commerce? Can municipal authorities sponsor public debate on future national directions? Can school districts follow the lead of Seattle and San Francisco and grant peace advocates the same access to students as they give to military recruiters? Can churches translate denominational peace statements into sustained discussion, reflection and witness? Can college students reach out beyond their elite core and take seriously the challenge of working with dorms, fraternity houses and campus clubs? Can unions and human-service organizations debate the war economy's immense domestic costs?

Just as non-violent resistance training has helped participants anticipate dangers and conflicts, examine their reasons for acting and explore what they hope to achieve, our organizations can conduct specific training for institutional outreach. We need to examine the barriers that prevent us and our peers from asking a group of neighbors or co-workers over to talk, or from approaching the local League of Women Voters or Kiwanis Club. We need to focus on this work without feeling that we are letting down the cause by not opting for the most visible militance.

If our outreach is successful, many we involve will challenge our perspectives. But they may still be willing to talk about the interconnected roots of our national choices. If we respect their right to define how far they can go in agreement and don't simply try to recruit them for a retroactive judgment that America's choices were wrong, we may be able to work together to question our nation's propensity for military adventure, energy policies that feed our hair-trigger belligerence and the absence of popular participation in making critical war and peace choices.

Our meetings need to offer specific opportunities to act. We can circulate reprints and lists of relevant books for people to read and share with friends. And encourage participants to meet again, form structured peer-support systems as critical as those of Alcoholics Anonymous and reflect on who they might involve in further conversations. The 25,000-member SANE/Freeze organization of Washington state, for example, has started to devote major resources to supporting members and community leaders in precisely these person-to-person approaches. They encourage people to:

- organize further house and community meetings and to write letters to newspapers, TV and radio stations, as well as local politicians;
- participate in study groups,
- develop anti-war artistic statements; and
- train for non-violent action.

In all these efforts, organizers don't tell participants to go home and try to change the world on their own. Rather, they invite them to become part of an active community. And remind them that they speak most powerfully not as countercultural outsiders but as citizens.

**Paul Rogat Loeb** is an associated scholar at Seattle's Institute for Global Security Studies.

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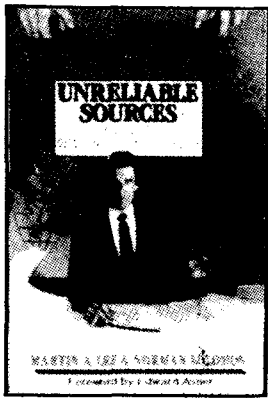
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## From Belfast to Los Angeles

Talking to blacks and other minorities in Los Angeles about the cops reminds me vividly of similar conversations with Catholics in Northern Ireland 25 years ago about the "B Specials." The Specials were a section of the Ulster security forces charged with the duty of keeping the Taigs—the Papists—in their place. They ruled by exemplary terror.

Catholics driving down a road in Ulster knew somewhere in the back of their minds that the headlights suddenly showing up behind them might belong to a car full of Specials, and that these Specials might stop them, beat them, frame them, maybe kill them.

The B Specials were part of the apparatus created by the Ulster elite to keep the Catholics down. The discrimination expressed itself in terms of religion, class and race (Protestant bigots firmly believed in the racial inferiority of their Catholic nationalist neighbors). The good jobs were reserved for Protestants; labor was kept subservient. Exemplary terror helped keep a whole system of economic and social exploitation on track.

At a far more grisly level, exemplary terror is how the elites maintain themselves in Guatemala or El Salvador or Brazil. The mutilated body by the side of the road on your way to work tells you that this is a system that can strike you down without justice and with impunity.

When William Parker became chief of the Los Angeles Police Department in 1950, the force was corrupt, fat off shakedowns of Central Avenue vice operations. In its stead, Parker forged a less-corrupt but brutal paramilitary force. His men, mostly white Southwesterners, behaved toward black neighborhoods like an occupying army.

Parker was fanatically opposed to race mixing. If at one level this meant busting mixed clubs on Central Avenue, it also meant the violent enforcement of race and class divisions in the city. Above all, it meant telling the thousands of blacks pouring into Los Angeles from the South in the '50s that this was no land of opportunity.

For the overt purpose of cleaning up the police department, it was made immune to political influence, thus creating a force beyond political control and a police chief with more political power than the mayor. This has been the case with Mayor Tom Bradley and Police Chief Darryl Gates.

Right at the start of Gates' term, Bradley did have a chance. Gates' men put twelve bullets in Eula Love, the Rodney King of her time, cut down for waving a two-inch paring knife. But the mayor wanted to be governor, so when Assemblywoman Maxine Waters and every black minister in town called for Gates' dismissal, Bradley sat on his hands, afraid to alienate white voters.

In the end, people won't put up with exemplary terror, even in the name of a "drug war." The Irish Catholics in Ulster rose in 1969. Four years earlier, the people of Watts—whom Parker called "monkeys in a zoo"—rebelled. A year earlier, the state attorney general was getting reports that Watts was going to blow. Then, as now, there was a rising curve of exemplary terror. In the six months before the rebellion began, there were 168 shootings by the LAPD. Between 1963 and 1965, white em-

ployment in the city was rising, while for minorities the trend was heading the other way.

A police force institutionally dedicated to the practice of exemplary terror is not reformed by the ouster of a police chief any more than racism in a police department is cured by hiring black or Hispanic officers. A black policeman who has absorbed his institution's culture from the police academy can be as much a part of the problem as his white colleague.

Gates should undoubtedly go, but the problem is far greater and beyond the powers of any single reformer installed in Gates' stead. All eyes are now directed at the LAPD, but the rot in County Sheriff Sherman Block's bailiwick is just as bad, even though Block can use sociological lingo far removed from Gates' oafish bluster.

It was Block's men who, in June 1989, were confronted by Betty Jean Aborn, a homeless black woman in Lancaster waving a carving knife. They fired 28 rounds at her, 18 of which found their mark. It was not Gates' men but the Hawthorne force that developed the radio language about "no human involved," meaning blacks, Latinos and poor whites.

Years of frustration and fury are now finding their expression in tumultuous meetings and hearings, as Gates is pressed toward the exit. It reminds me of the same angry, excited tumult in Ulster in 1969. In that instance, the Specials were disbanded. But the underlying system of economic exploitation and injustice was never threatened, and instead of the Specials

### In the end, people won't put up with exemplary terror.

came other security forces. The unaccountability and the violence grew again.

True reform here, as anywhere, will come only when there is true accountability, and that means review boards with teeth, community control and, beyond that, a program for economic justice. Without social programs, there will, in the end, be the same old violence program to keep the poor in their place.

### Dustbins of history

We live in the age of throwaway history. Nobody remembers what anyone said the day before yesterday. And if someone does have an inconvenient memory, they say it doesn't matter anymore.

Take April Glaspie, who testified before a Senate committee last week about what she might or might not have said to Saddam Hussein in their famous meeting in Baghdad on July 25, 1990.

You'll recall that Glaspie was the U.S. ambassador in Iraq. In mid-September, the Iraqis released a transcript of her conversation with Hussein. The State Department never disputed its accuracy, and it seemed to show that Glaspie, on behalf of her government, was telling the Iraqi president that his quarrels with Kuwait were of no great concern to the United States.

## ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn

After months of silence, Ambassador Glaspie told the senators March 20 that the Iraqi transcript was defective by reason of omission. It had left out her most serious warnings to Hussein that if he moved with military force against Kuwait, the U.S. would take this as an unacceptable threat to its security interests.

It's an important issue. The charge made against the Bush administration last year was that Hussein felt emboldened to march into Kuwait only because two Republican presidents had presided over years of appeasement of the Iraqi tyrant. Glaspie now says that in the all-important late July days the U.S. stood firm and Hussein had fair warning.

Let's go back to the transcript, whose accuracy regarding what she did say the State Department did not dispute.

After agreeing that the low price of oil—engineered by Kuwaiti overproduction—has been disastrous for Iraq, Glaspie said, "We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait."

A few days later, only 48 hours before the invasion, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs John Kelly testified to a House foreign-relations subcommittee in exactly the same fashion. This was no Iraqi transcript, and this was the message that Hussein heard, courtesy of the BBC World Service.

In other words, the U.S. gave Hussein every reason to suppose that there would not be too much trouble if he took the resolute action which, as the transcript shows, he made clear to Glaspie he had in mind.

Call it an inconvenient memory.

Here's another one. When the debate over the propriety of going to war was still raging in the pre-January 16 days, before bombing stilled all qualms, many doubters said that war might create more problems than it solved.

Only last week, James Schlesinger, former secretary of defense under Richard Nixon, said that Iran was now master of the Persian Gulf. Iran, you may remember, was the Great Satan of American policymakers throughout the '80s. The real nightmare was of crusading fundamentalism sweeping down through to menace the Trucial States and Saudi Arabia.

Exactly as predicted, war has now weakened to the point of prostration Iraq, the traditional buffer against Iran. Almost the only thing that could be said for Iraqi Baathism was that it was resolutely secular, with only opportunistic deference to Islam. The mullahs are resurgent. American policymakers now face a dilemma of their own making. Israel would like a Lebanized Iraq. Turkey would like the northern Kurdish portion. Iran would like the southern Shia chunk. Saudi Arabia would like Iraq in its present shape, run by a Sunni Muslim military dictator.

Chances are that the U.S. will prefer either a weakened Saddam or the Saudi option—which leaves things much as they were before, with the Bush government underwriting a tyranny possibly even more brutal than Saddam's but twice as compliant.

It is perhaps even more inconvenient to recall all the high-minded talk about a just

war and the rule of law.

President Bush said he had no quarrel with the Iraqi people. His military commanders said that targeting was against military targets only.

Red Cross and U.N. relief workers inspecting Iraq now say the destruction is of "near apocalyptic" proportions. Iraq was indeed bombed back into the 19th century. There will be devastating epidemics, a decline in life expectancy and a rise in infant mortality.

Speaking privately on Capitol Hill, Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf says that up to 100,000 Iraqi soldiers probably died. These deaths would mostly have come after Iraq had announced its acceptance of U.N. resolutions and a cease-fire.

Before the war began, other experts told Bush that the Iraqis would blow up Kuwait's oil wells, causing environmental devastation. Bush pressed on, and the devastation is duly occurring.

One more inconvenient memory. Many who supported economic sanctions against Iraq questioned whether blood should be shed to prop up the Sabahs of Kuwait, a dynasty whose latest emir had suspended the constitution, whose prisons nourished torturers, whose workers—many of whom had been born in Kuwait—were denied elementary rights.

Today American GIs on the Kuwaiti border stand aghast as tortured Palestinians, Sudanese and other minorities are flung out in the sand by Kuwaiti soldiers. Summary executions continue inside Kuwait, whose government announces that it proposes to hang 600 "collaborators." Human-rights workers have denounced wholesale breaches of international laws governing treatment of prisoners and refugees.

Meanwhile, the city is at a standstill while the Palestinians who made Kuwait work cower in their homes, fearing the knock of a rabble who spent the war abroad, some of them dancing in Egyptian discos. The only fully functioning establishment in Kuwait is the \$2 million pro tem palace for the emir, replete with gold-plated taps.

Was the vast disturbance and terrible death toll of the Gulf war all for this?

One final and inconvenient memory. There were opportunities for negotiation. Sanctions could have been pressed. The war need not have happened, and we would have been spared many things, including the most expensive re-election campaign in history.

Distributed by Alexander Cockburn



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By Will Nixon

**I** CAUGHT UP ON MY PORNOGRAPHY A few years ago, thanks to an assignment to cover the homeless who live in Times Square's all-night movie theaters. I started at the Big Apple Theater, where people have been known to sleep for three days nestled into plastic-upholstered red seats. Mice foraged on the floor among crumpled take-out bags—the smarter Times Square

## PORNOGRAPHY

theaters have cats—and a dozen men kept slipping into a synchronous snore so loud I imagined a 20-foot-tall Cyclops sleeping off a hang-over in the back seats.

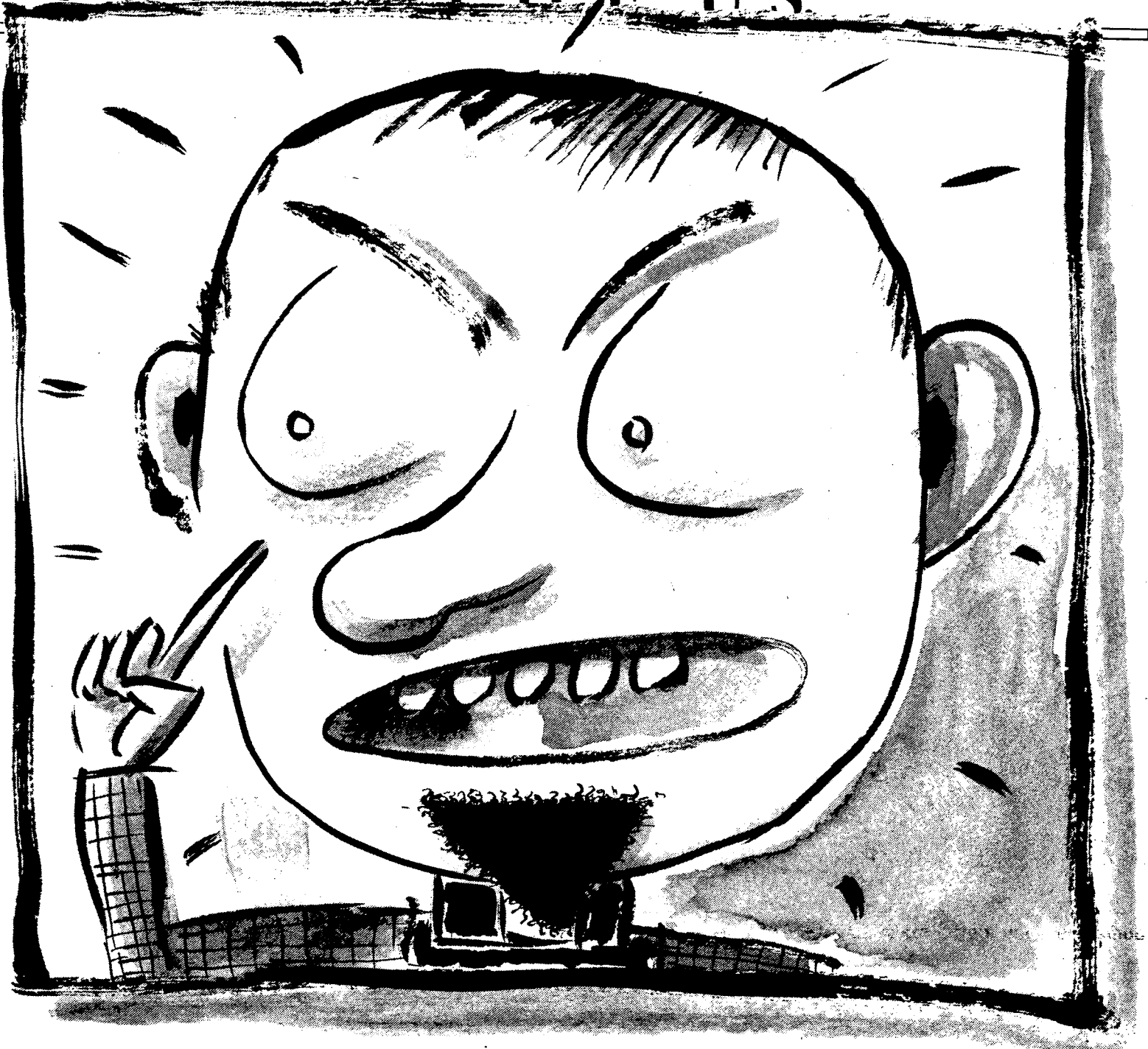
At seven in the morning a janitor arrived with a bucket of industrial-strength ammonia that woke everyone up nose first, and the destitute men filed out of this side of the twin cinema into its neighbor, where they went right back to sleep. They were the ragged rejects of our society, men with plum-colored eyes, sooty chins, feet almost painful to walk on. Up on the screen, the hyper-healthy studs and mares dressed only in gold watches and earrings, hair mousse and string-bikini tans looked like they could ball forever.

Sleeping people don't offer much copy, so the next night I went to the Cameo Cinema and found Sodom and Gomorrah in full swing. A condom-vending machine hung on the lobby wall, ignored by all. Missy, a young man with Peter Frampton curls and a heavy touch with mascara, asked if I wanted a date. JUST THE FACTS, MA'AM, I sort of replied. Someone withdrawn deep in a sweatshirt hood larger than a Benedictine monk's stood under the "Men's" light to fashion a drug pipe from a plastic straw and tin-foil packet.

Up on the balcony, where the real action was, a man reached out to shake something other than my hand, rattling off prices faster than an auctioneer. "A reporter?" he said, pulling his hand away as if it had been bitten. The quiet homeless men, who arrived just before 10, when admission jumped from \$1.99 to \$4.99, found seats alone and tried to keep half-awake so their pockets wouldn't get slashed for change. They disappeared like wallflowers into the boisterous crowd that was now passing around a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken.

I came back in the morning to talk with the young manager, who was rolling down the metal grate at six. He felt sorry for the homeless men, not for the rest. A regular came dashing up as the grate closed, claiming he'd left his lighter in the theater. His electric-blue nylon coat draped his body like a cape—Captain Blow Job, it seemed. "I don't want to smell his breath. I turn my face away," the

c 1991 Peter Hannan



## A free speech from the wild, man

manager told me moments later. "He's probably got every kind of disease there is in there."

**Of Meese and men:** The porn world of Times Square came as quite a shock to the initiated—me—and I've never been tempted to go back. All of the grand arguments about pornography, from violence to freedom of speech to the degradation of women, looked awfully abstract and irrelevant from the seats of the Big Apple Theater and the Cameo Cinema. The crowd was the real story here, not the rabbit-work up on the screen. But the moralizers always prefer to stick to the celluloid; it saves them the trouble of real people, real problems.

Attorney General Edwin Meese, who rang the church bells for Ronald Reagan's commission on pornography, was the same man who had defiantly claimed hunger did not exist in America when the bedraggled homeless swept onto our steam grates in the early '80s. Meese retired to ignominy—even his New York

publisher lost interest and rejected his memoirs—but the church bells clang on, now in the furious hands of Rev. Donald Wildmon of Tupelo, Miss.

Wildmon may never have been inside the likes of the Big Apple or the Cameo, but by his thinking, he hardly needs to go. Pornography lurks around the corner of every mall, is found right out in the open of *Playboy* magazine, comes on television even before you've had time to digest dinner. Two years ago Wildmon hit media gold when he found the National Endowment for the Arts. But the reporting on him hasn't quite conveyed his truly bitter flavor, probably because the rhetoric of his anti-pornography crusade is so sordid.

Anyone who has seen Robert Mapplethorpe's classical portraits or Andres Serrano's color-drenched photos of submerged crucifixes will quickly realize that the pornography lies not in the art but in the feverish language used by the fundamentalist

right to describe it. For a true taste of Wildmon, it's worth letting the man speak for himself, as he does in the monthly publication of his American Family Association, *AFA Journal*, and in his frequent fundraising letters.

**Eye of the withholder:** "The reason the media will not expose 2 Live Crew, Mapplethorpe or abortion is that they realize if the public knew the horrible nature of these things, they wouldn't stand for it. As long as the media talk about choice in-

**Anyone who's seen Mapplethorpe's portraits will realize pornography lies not in the art but in the feverish language used by the fundamentalist right to describe it.**

stead of babies, free speech instead of damaging vaginal walls, and artistic expression instead of a photo of one man urinating into the mouth of another, then they don't have to answer for their advocacy problem."

Wildmon writes in one of his monthly editorials.

So don't expect much "G"-rated material in this family journal. "The work was titled 'Piss Christ,'" Wildmon reports of Serrano's now-infamous photograph. "When asked, since he had worked with urine, what could be expected next, Mr. Serrano responded, 'Semen.'" That the artist has already made a complementary "Milk Christ" never gets mentioned. But the *AFA Journal* did publish one of its rare pictures, a black-and-white of the artwork, with the caption, "Clearly visible are apparent beads of uric acid." Wildmon wants us to know he's not afraid to lift up the toilet lid and report what's below.

Each month the *AFA Journal* goes out to 200,000 fundamentalist shock troopers, who in turn feed back \$5 million a year in bite-sized contributions of \$5 and \$10. It has no scent cards and rarely any ads, though Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) did offer an enthusiastic blurb in one ad for a dating video called "For Girls Only" that has the sales tag, "One 15-minute decision made wrong can change you inside and out forever!!!"

The layout owes more to a stodgy encyclopedia than anything you might find on a newsstand. But each month continues the saga of Wild-



By Pat Aufderheide

mon's crusade to clean up pornographic America. And no act is too small. "When Linda Clements of Palmetto, Fla., saw that Food Lion...was selling Playboy Air Fresheners," begins one of his heartwarming little-people items, "she wrote the company, telling them that while there was nothing pornographic about the air fresheners, 'when you allow the Playboy Penthouse empire space on your shelves, you keep the pornography gears turning.'" The Food Lion soon dropped the offending air freshener.

The AFA Journal harps on some basic stories that never quite go away: hotels that offer "adult movies," convenience stores that carry "adult magazines" and television programming. And the villains behind our pornographic state wind up being the blandest of corporate giants: K mart, RJR Nabisco, Philip Morris General Foods Kraft, Holiday Inns.

Even the U.S. government was deemed a porn king several years ago for selling men's magazines in military PXs and in prisons. Wildmon hammers away at his target for several months until some concession occurs that he calls victory. Last October he anointed Burger King as his villain for the upcoming year. A very sensitive couch potato, Wildmon claimed, "During the monitoring period, Burger King helped sponsor 18.85 incidents of sex, violence and profanity with every 30-second commercial it ran on prime-time network television."

**Sometimes you gotta make the rules:** His boycott quickly reached a satisfactory conclusion when Burger King begged off its profane image by running half-page ads in 550 newspapers, saying, in part, "Burger King wishes to go on record as supporting traditional American values on television, especially the importance of family."

The AFA Journal has its eccentricities: "CBS continues coverup in Mighty Mouse cocaine scene" was a classic headline several years back. Or "Miss America told to stop singing Christian rap songs." But the unintended humor that fills the AFA Journal suffocates under its relentless tone. K mart, for instance, which won't force its subsidiary Waldenbooks to withdraw Playboy and Penthouse takes it on the chin time and time again.

"K mart adds homosexual porn in Waldenbooks outlets," ran a headline you may have missed last September. The AFA Journal story said, "According to the Montgomery [Md.] Journal, Waldenbooks carries cartoon books showing men engaging in ... [perverted] ... sexual activities. Also stocked are a series of books with titles such as Meat, Wad, and Raunch. These books are billed as a collection of real-life gay sexual experiences, and they recount such stories as multiple anal rape and consumption of feces." With his readers now properly revolted, Wildmon urges them to "Call K mart and tell them you are joining the boycott." Or "you can write Chair-

man Joseph Antonini." I rang Waldenbooks instead and learned that a box of gay porn did indeed land at a store somewhere—and was returned as soon as corporate headquarters heard about it. But Wildmon wasn't about to let up. "Kiddie porn on sale at mall bookstores," he announced in a November fundraising letter. "The series, called 'The Victorian Era,' describes in lurid detail sadomasochistic torture, rape and sodomy inflicted on children."

The publisher of "The Victorian Era" at Blue Moon Books, Barney Rosset, fought countless anti-censorship battles during the '50s and '60s at Grove Press. "It's as if people are not allowed to have fantasies—or don't have them—even when I know everybody does," he said. Of course, the AFA Journal reeks of fantasy, the fantasy of a sinful world, but Rosset took Wildmon quite seriously.

Censorship doesn't always stare you eye to eye; often it creeps in among a host of considerations so you can't be sure if it's there or not. "The Victorian Era," first launched to generate cash for Blue Moon Books that could be spun into more serious books such as a new poetry series, had spawned bad imitators that Rosset fears could drag down the whole niche. And publishing has felt the general recession like anyone else. Adding Wildmon's com-



plaints on top of these problems could spell trouble.

"I'm not optimistic," Rosset said. And indeed, though he hadn't heard the word yet, Waldenbooks had stopped ordering the specific titles Wildmon mentioned, if not the entire series. "They are not kiddie porn," said Jeff Rogart, Waldenbooks vice president of merchandising. "But frankly, due to declining sales we stopped buying them."

Rogart certainly sounded sincere, and Waldenbooks continues to carry other adult books, giving Wildmon fresh copy for his January AFA Journal. ("The written pornography they contain is so perverse that we simply cannot even attempt to describe it. The books contain depictions of children having sex with adults and animals, and incidents of perverted activities involving priests and ministers.")

**Black-lister video:** It's a depressing exercise to add up the successes Wildmon claims to have, whether he's really responsible or not. Last

fall he attacked the new NC-17 movie rating, specifically boycotting Blockbuster Video, which announced within weeks that it wouldn't carry these movies.

In a Los Angeles Times article, Ron Castell, a company spokesman, said that "less than a thousand" pre-printed boycott cards had arrived in the mail. When Blockbuster Video investigated, he said, "we found that most came from people who don't do business with us anyway." But, mimicking Wildmon's argument, he said that "the criteria used for NC-17 was the same as the X. So we're saying that, since NC-17 is the same criteria as the X, we're not going to carry it." Blockbuster already carried two of the films that sparked the NC-17 rating, *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover* and *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!*, but this detail didn't seem to matter in their decision.

Most Americans know the difference between Waldenbooks and the Big Apple Theater. *The Simpsons* (a favorite AFA Journal target) and *Screw* magazine. But Wildmon, who has been on this warpath since 1976, when he found his calling one night while watching some very un-Christian TV shows, doesn't seem to suffer by blurring distinctions between the two. Back in 1981, Owen Butler, the chairman of Procter and Gamble, told the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences that Christian Leaders for Responsible Television, Wildmon's group at the time, was "expressing very important and broadly held views about gratuitous sex, violence and profanity. I can assure you that we are listening very carefully to what they say, and I urge you to do the same." Corporate figures may not speak so naively these days, but the effects can be just the same.

"He's a master manipulator of the media," says Chris Finan, who watchdogs Wildmon for the Media Coalition. "He knows how to exploit the fears of major American corporations. Faced with the prospect of being called pro-pornography, just about no American corporation wouldn't duck."

This spring, Wildmon has fresh chickens to pluck. On April 14, CBS will air a docudrama, *Absolute Strangers*, about a Long Island man who had to fight a horrendous legal battle to save his wife's life by aborting her 17-week-old fetus when she slipped into a comatose state after a car accident. The reverend, of course, does not approve. "Most advertisers I know wouldn't want to be involved in any kind of program, pro or con, about abortion," Wildmon told the Los Angeles Times. In mid-May, ABC should earn his wrath with an Ann-Margaret and Julie Andrews movie, *Our Sons*, about two mothers sharing the pain as one's son dies of AIDS. But the real pornography this spring will be playing in the thoughts of Rev. Wildmon. If only we could project his mind onto the Cameo Theater screen, we could all see the whole revolting show.

**Will Nixon** is a writer living in New Jersey.

## Can't help myself

Hollywood is reeling from the aftershocks of last summer's high-budget, low-profit blockbusters. And this January, Disney studio head Jeffrey Katzenberg sent out a memo to his staff calling for recession-related spending policies and a return to Disney's recent formula for success: low budgets, slightly tarnished stars, new (cheap) talent. The memo was the talk of the town. So what's Disney planning? Several \$35 million-plus movies and upcoming releases with gazillion-dollar stars such as Dustin Hoffman. Disney is not alone. Universal has a Steven Spielberg project that will top \$70 million (but will also net it an entire dinosaur-theme amusement park), and Fox has several high-budget films in the works too.

Perhaps vigorous cross-marketing will defray costs. At least that's what Disney's hoping. The company has struck more than a hundred cross-promotion and licensing deals for three of its new films. If you recognize the title *The Rocketeer*, for instance, before the film gets to your local theater, you'll probably have to look no further than your local fast-food joint, toy store or breakfast cereal.

## The cost of trading

The big are getting bigger in broadcasting. It all began in the 1980s, when the Federal Communications Commission revoked the rule that broadcast stations had to be held for three years before being sold. Stations were traded wildly at ever-escalating prices. The bottom finally fell out of the market, though, and stations carrying gigantic debt loads are now languishing for sellers. Group ownership has risen in the last two years, according to the National Association of Broadcasters, from two-thirds to three-quarters of all television stations. Tops in weekly circulation—the Tribune Broadcasting Group, part of the mass-media empire that also controls newspapers and magazines. Right behind is Capital Cities ABC, also a big-time cross-owner of media and major cable player.

## Doing good, doing well

The commercialization of public service in radio and television marches on. Nike describes its "Don't be stupid, stay in school" spots as a "corporate-image campaign," which it well needs in light of the blotches that high-fashion sneaker murders leave on its reputation. Nike didn't air them as public-service announcements, or PSAs, because it wanted better time slots than PSAs usually get. Other vulnerable corporations are working their names into public-service ads as well—note Anheuser-Busch's "Know when to say when" spots. Some wonder what this trend will do to the time available for PSAs in a broadcast day. But, increasingly, stations have a vested interest in airing PSAs—or at least some kinds. They're buying prepackaged PSA campaigns for safely universal issues, such as prenatal care, and attaching their own names to the series of spots. That way, PSAs become corporate-image campaigns for the station. The only people left out in the cold are those with non-commercial or controversial messages, or those who need to hear them. Of course, the original function of PSAs was to air just such messages as are now being excluded.

## Restive audience

Television viewers are more fed up with television than ever before, and some of them aren't even taking it anymore—or, at least, not as much of it. A study by Lintas:USA, done for the third year in a row, shows that heavy viewers say they're watching less television than last year and that they noticed the increase in the number of commercials. They also believe they're seeing more sex and violence, and a substantial minority say they're willing to boycott advertised products and complain to the station. Some 19 percent say they belong to an organization that wants to influence TV content (up from 5 percent the year before).

## Cheers!

Feeling in need of a little ersatz experience? Normal airport atmosphere just isn't fake enough? Coming soon to an airport near you is a chain of Cheers bars. Not only will they imitate the popular television show's set but they will also have two animated robots looking like the characters Norm and Cliff planted permanently on barstools. You'll also be able to buy a Cheers sweatshirt or drinking mug.

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20 IN THESE TIMES APRIL 3-9, 1991



**Good as fool's gold:** Some problems stemmed from inherent contradictions in the global marketplace. For example, U.S. policy was torn between maintaining an adequate supply of dollars to buoy up the world economy and restraining domestic inflation. Accepting some inflation and exporting it to other countries meant that the dollar was less and less "good as gold." This dilemma has been intimately linked over the past two decades to turmoil in global trade and finance, oil price shocks, the Third World debt crisis and the woes of U.S. manufacturing in the early '80s.

Geopolitical constraints of fighting communism often led the U.S. to tolerate European and Japanese policies that were clearly not laissez faire but were obviously quite successful. These countries often remain committed to self-conscious national economic strategies. Now some economists recognize that there is not some naturally ordained division of labor, determined by the invisible hand, that's most efficient. Historical accident, cumulative learning and deliberate policies can create competitive advantages for nations.

"Free trade in the textbook sense does not and cannot exist," Kuttner insists. The alternative is to recognize that all international trade is inherently political. That does not mean abandoning the market or the quest for equitable rules to govern trade and international investment but recognizing and negotiating the political interests that other countries will inevitably, and wisely, not abandon. "The paradox of our quixotic quest for free trade," Kuttner writes, "has been that it has denied us freer trade."

Nations and their interests cannot be banished from international trade, Kuttner argues. Like Reich, he asks, "Who is 'us'?" He concludes that the financial interests that support international laissez faire do not represent the American people.

**Laissez-faire game:** Not only does global laissez faire ignore the reality of international trade and ultimately weaken the U.S. economically, despite some lingering benefits of being the hegemonic power, but also the system itself is flawed, Kuttner argues. Laissez faire leads to instability and inequity, at home and among nations. Over the past decade, the U.S. has had to work more cooperatively with the major industrial nations to deal with both of these problems—trying to stabilize currencies and international banking, and negotiating debts of Third World and Eastern European countries. But the treatment has consisted of one aspirin before bedtime for a chronic, worsening ailment with crippling effects.

Conflicts between the geopolitical and geoeconomic roles of the U.S. have created their own special problems. For example, the U.S. has ignored other countries' unfair trade practices or struck economic deals (such as giving Japan major conces-

sions on joint development of the FSX aircraft) that hurt U.S. producers in order to win political aims. U.S. security restrictions on exports—hardly a laissez-faire policy—have lost U.S. producers huge export markets to competitors.

Kuttner's central thesis is that "the idea of a pure market system is a hopeless and hazardous crusade—government is necessarily enmeshed in a modern industrial economy." He favors the kinds of public investments Reich supports but also advocates stronger management of trade. The nation and national businesses are still important economically. Also, if there are to be any social bargains struck with workers or other citizen interests, the government must have some capacity to manage its national economy. For that to happen in the U.S., our government must both assert greater control over private corporations and work cooperatively with other nations to manage transnational corporations and markets, Kuttner writes. Without such moves, he implies, both national sovereignty and democracy will be threatened by the powers of global economic actors.

**The hollow men:** Let us consider a few of the issues raised in these books—the character of the transnational corporation, the role of the nation, the relevance of social class and the future of democracy.

There are corporations that resemble Reich's picture of a global web of decentralized units, and global expansion certainly appears to be the order of the day. Yet much globalization, especially of U.S. companies, is a result of the particular global economic rules and post-war U.S. hegemony that Kuttner critiques. New rules could reshape those trends.

Also, there remain profound differences among both corporations and nations: the web of most Japanese corporations consists, as Kuttner stresses, of longer-term, less-contingent ties than many U.S. multinational webs. Japanese auto assemblers in the U.S. have even brought with them their own web of parts suppliers, for example.

In addition, as Charles Sabel and Michael Piore have demonstrated in their studies of successful industrial districts in Europe, there are cooperative webs of small businesses, aided by local government, that channel competition in non-destructive ways and keep jobs at home. In some cases, the new webs Reich mentions are more appropriately described as "hollow corporations" (*Business Week's* phrase). Reich himself notes that many American corporations are run more like shifting stock portfolios than integrated companies.

In short, even as many corporations may move away from a pyramidal, bureaucratic stereotype, there are many alternatives with different implications for national economies. And in many cases, corporations still have strong national identities that concentrate the benefits of globalization back home.

Also, Reich's emphasis on value-added vs. high-volume production seems overstated. Certainly, the Japanese have not abandoned high-volume production even as they move upwards into more sophisticated products. Besides, manufacturing can also increasingly benefit from a better-educated, less-routinized work force: the jobs need not go overseas to be competitive. In any case, if manufacturing goes, why won't symbolic analysis move as well? Reich notes that many skilled engineers or other experts can be found at one-tenth their U.S. price in some Asian countries. And if the U.S. economy becomes hollowed

emerging global economy seems to take too seriously the utopian ideal of the free market. The market does not consist simply of exchanges of goods, services and labor; there are inherent power relations as well.

The globalized economy raises the specter of multinationals transcending even the biggest nations. Indeed, Reich's prescriptions for "the work of nations" sound much like the enlightened economic advice now given to state governors seeking to lure business. So in the future world economy, the U.S. as a nation might have the clout that, say, Texas has in today's U.S. economy. Just as with the states, many countries will

gravitates to supranational financial and trade institutions, the ability of citizens to exercise democratic control will diminish, as the GATT talks on trade rules now underway demonstrate. Without such institutions, however, the transnational corporations and investors themselves will greatly circumscribe the powers of democratic politics.

**Symbol arithmetic:** Many of the symbolic analysts already sense a new international identity, even if few workers do. They are, however, a mixed bag: some truly do represent the growing importance of knowledge-based production. But their growth in numbers and wealth—often at the expense of other workers—also reflects expansion of such problem solvers as corporate lawyers, advertising agencies, currency traders and the like. There's an old-fashioned word that better describes them: parasites. With fewer of them employed and all of them taking less money, many production workers could be better paid and still keep jobs in the U.S. Such leanly staffed firms as Nucor, a successful U.S. steel company, demonstrate that option.

Despite an overstatement of current globalization and an understatement of the degree to which many corporations and their nations of origin are linked, Reich is quite right that the well-being of Americans is not identical with the well-being of American companies. Yet, practically, citizens could exercise more leverage over domestic firms. Also, Reich fails to recognize strongly enough that globalization calls for greater governmental control over the market in order to promote not only national economic goals but also global stability and balanced growth. That is the great strength of Kuttner's argument: the flaws in the emerging global economy—and the solutions—are not just in the behavior of the corporate actors but in the regulation of the world economic system itself. The work of nations in the years to come is not just making themselves attractive places for investment but in taming the new world marketplace for the sake of democracy and greater equality among both people and nations. ■

## What will be the fate of nations, democratic politics and the welfare of the world's citizens?

out, how will the symbolic analysts here remain ahead of the game? Who will turn to U.S. "experts" if they can't manage their own economy well?

Certainly, it's true that foreign investment has contributed to employment in the U.S. (although preventing U.S. corporate disinvestment might have yielded more jobs). But why should we expect foreign-owned companies to be any more responsible or accountable than U.S. corporations have been? Reich is right in vilifying American corporations and arguing that they aren't us. But neither are the Japanese corporations, whom Reich seems to see as our saviors. Posing the issue in this way is a replay of an unproductive argument over whether to support corporate raiders or fat-cat executives. The answer is neither: what's needed is a way to make all corporations more accountable to citizens and workers in every country, including the U.S. It may be slightly easier to do that with domestically based companies.

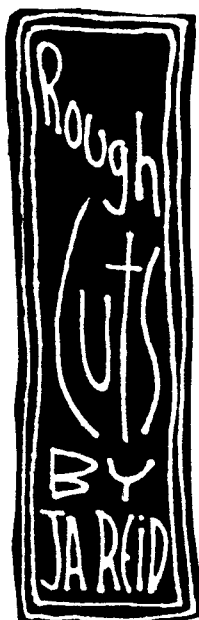
**Money talks, biz squawks:** The meaning of ownership—or control—of corporations certainly is changing, but if it doesn't mean anything anymore, why do rich people and corporate executives fight so hard to gain it? Reich's picture of the

be tempted to lure business not through public investment but by cutting wages and public services.

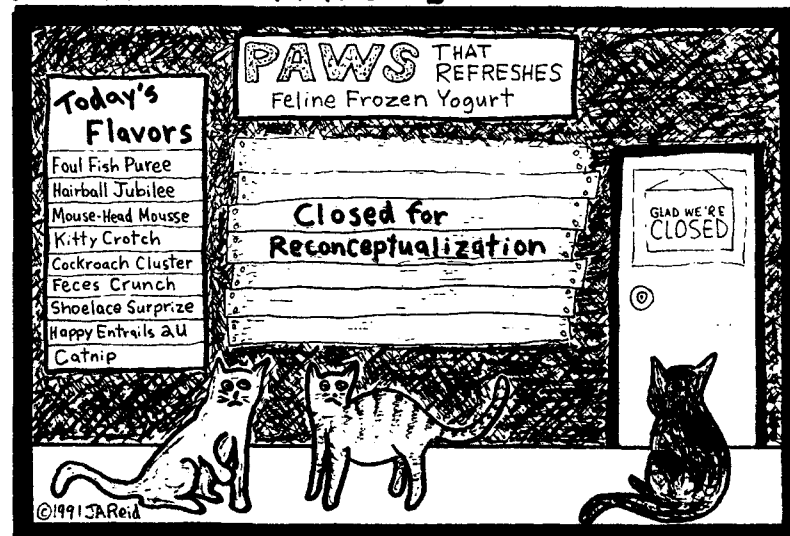
It is significant that Reich innocently talks about the U.S. as a "work force" and our mission as "adding value" to the world economy, that is, making more profitable commodities. But people are also citizens who may desire to add other kinds of value to social life: without the possibility of strong, democratic national politics, the narrow categories of economic life will rule even more.

But when we ask, "Who is 'us'?" the answer is not only that we are Americans. Most of us also are workers, or have some other self-identification, perhaps as environmentalists or persons with African or Latin American roots, that potentially can tie us to people of other countries. The welfare of the average autoworker, for example, may be as much linked to union rights and higher wages for a Mexican autoworker as it is linked to either a Japanese or U.S. automaker.

Yet, for the foreseeable future, such solidarity will have to be mediated through national governments that have some power both to limit corporate power and cooperate on new global rules of investment. Yet as power necessarily



### Near Misses in Marketing #87





# Myths

Continued from page 13

## Iraqi military targets, allied pilots painstakingly avoided civilian targets.

The myth of accurate allied smart bombs has been widely promulgated, and the American media has largely ignored evidence to the contrary. On January 29, the *Boston Globe* quoted former Navy Secretary John Lehman as saying that only 60 percent of U.S. laser-guided bombs had hit their targets and that the misses had already resulted in "at least 2,000 or 3,000" civilian casualties.

That same day, Alfonso Rojo, Baghdad correspondent for the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo*, reported that the holy city of Najaf, located 125 miles south of the Iraqi capital, had been bombed by the allies. "There are no chemical plants or nuclear installations in the area," he wrote. "There are not even reserve military barracks." Rojo also reported that during a February 2 attack on the southern Iraqi town of Nasiriyah a bridge was bombed during rush hour, killing at least 47 civilians.

Because the allies targeted Iraq's civilian infrastructure—including bridges, power stations and water supplies—even those civilians not killed in the bombings were grievously affected. On February 10, the *Washington Post* quoted a surgeon who said mortality rates for emergency patients in Baghdad hospitals had more than tripled "not only due to injuries but because of [declining] hygiene and hospital infections." The *Post* reported on March 4 that Iraqi cities were experiencing outbreaks of diarrhea and were bracing for epidemics of cholera, typhoid and polio.

10. We will never know the number of

## Iraqi casualties.

At a January 18 press conference in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Gen. Schwarzkopf responded to a question about Iraqi casualty figures by saying, "I have absolutely no idea what the Iraqi casualties are. And I tell you, if I have anything to say about it, we're never going to get into the body-count business."

Although the *New York Times* reported on March 6 that President Bush had ordered the military to compile data on Iraqi casualties, Defense Secretary Richard Cheney and other administration officials have refused to release any figures.

At a March 12 press conference, Defense Department spokesman Pete Williams closely followed Schwarzkopf's lead. In answer to the question, "Have we ever gotten a U.S. estimate of the number of Iraqi casualties?" Williams replied, "No, and I don't know that we ever will." When pressed, Williams admitted, "We have some estimates," but he declined to give a number.

The Hussein government, plagued by Iraq's internal unrest, has also proven unwilling to divulge the magnitude of Iraqi losses. Thus, Americans may never receive a final casualty count from either government.

NBC News, however, has obtained what it called a "high-confidence" estimate from U.S. military sources suggesting that allied forces killed as many as 150,000 Iraqi soldiers. Iraq's Red Crescent director claimed that 6,000-7,000 Iraqi civilians had been killed during the war's first three weeks.

All of this leads one to wonder whether the allied victory did in fact establish what George Bush has called "a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations."

# Guilty

Continued from page 24

into those Cold War habits of thought. To make David Merrill a non-political creature ("They threw me out for arguing too much," the character wryly sums up his Party encounters) effectively disconnects politics from the story.

Winkler has shrewdly personalized the trauma of the red scare in *Guilty by Suspicion*, making it at once more accessible and less threatening to audiences uncomfortable with politics. Joining the story at the onslaught of the naming phase, he can gracefully and logically shape the story around what became the era's most dramatic crisis of conscience rather than deal with the fundamental injustice of the underlying situation: the right's systematic dismantling of the left.

**Hands across the water:** The cast includes some of those whose careers were snuffed, most prominently Sam Wanamaker, who plays a lawyer apparently based on Martin Gang, the liberal attorney who represented informers. A bright young Broadway actor and director new to Hollywood in the late '40s, Wanamaker was a leftist who worked in many organizations that included Communists.

He went to England to do a Clifford Odets play in 1951. A hit, it ran two years, during which time word came from home that the HUAC intended to subpoena him. Wanamaker's passport expired as well, and the U.S. government refused to renew it except for return to America. Wanamaker says, "It was certain that I would have been blacklisted in the United States, prevented from working there, and refused a passport for work abroad."

So he applied for and obtained British res-

idency, a permit that he had to renew every year, wondering if the UK would succumb to American pressures to deport him. He built a stage career in England, but British movies eventually blacklisted him to placate their American distributors. "They were very apologetic," he recalls. But they did it anyway. "There was a pragmatic approach to this whole idea," Wanamaker says, "which was lacking in a certain kind of principle."

*Guilty by Suspicion* is a principled film and not the most pragmatic project for someone beginning his directing career, even though he's already a power in Hollywood. The industry enjoys devouring its past but has shunned this morsel, which provided background to a love story about the costs of political commitment in *The Way We Were*. The New York situation in television was covered in *The Front*, with Woody Allen in the title role, but Winkler has the distinction of being the first to devote a whole movie to what playwright Lillian Hellman called Scoundrel Time.

*Guilty by Suspicion* may well be the best we can expect Hollywood to do by the blacklist era; it certainly seems brave in the current climate. Winkler is especially good at capturing the sense of invulnerability that the blacklist shattered in Hollywood, and that implicitly looks forward to today. In fact, Winkler says he thinks it's happening again, citing the fact that actor Woody Harrelson was fired from a Mardi Gras parade after he participated in an anti-war rally. "I don't know what's going to happen to Peter Arnett when Sen. Simpson calls him a collaborator," Winkler says. "HUAC was pretty crude. We have more sophisticated ways of blacklisting people now."

Pat Dowell is a Washington-based writer and critic who reports on movies for National Public Radio's "Morning Edition."

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### NEW HAVEN, CT YALE UNIVERSITY April 14

POST-COMMUNIST FUTURES FOR EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION, at Yale University, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sunday, April 14, co-sponsored by Campaign for Peace and Democracy and Yale University. Panel I: "Economic Options for Eastern Europe and the USSR"—Leonid Grigoryev, USSR; Tadeusz Kowalik, Poland; Joanne Landy, USA. Panel II: "Eastern Europe, the USSR, and the Post-Cold War World"—Jiri Dienstbier, Czech & Slovak Federal Republic; Mary Kaldor, England; Charles William Maynes, USA. Workshops on the media, political parties, nationalities, labor, gender family, environment, global economic order, etc. International participants include: Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Konstanty Gebert, Boris Kagarlitsky, Sonja Licht, Ferenc Miszlivetz, Milan Nikolic, Jirina Siklova, Daniel Singer and others. Pre-registration: \$15 \$10 students (lunch included). Call (212) 666-5924 for information.

### WELLESLEY, MA April 19-21

C.L.R. JAMES, HIS INTELLECTUAL LEGACIES, an international conference on history, culture and politics. Speakers include: Cornel West, Sylvia Wynter, Derek Walcott, Edward Said, Biodun Jeifo, Henry Louis Gates, Cedric Robinson, Robin Blackburn, Paul Buhle and many more. Preregistration, \$39.50, \$24 for graduates, \$12 for undergraduates. Contact Selwyn R. Cudjoe or Bill Cain, CLR James Conference, Black Studies Department, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA 02181. Phone (617) 235-0320 for more details.

### LOVELAND, OH May 4

LEARNING ECONOMICS: EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR ACTION. A training session with economist

Amata Miller that teaches participants how to facilitate economic literacy workshops with groups of women using the workbook *Learning Economics*, published by the Religious Network for Equality for Women. The workbook provides a six-session program that invites women to make connections between their lives and the workings of the U.S. economy. Women learn to take action both individually and collectively to improve their communities, workplaces, and public policy. Cost: \$25-\$35 (sliding scale), including lunch. Contact: Audrey Sorrento, GRAILVILLE, 932 O'Bannonville Rd., Loveland, OH 45140. Phone: (513) 683-2340.

### CHICAGO May 4

THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WRITING GUILD SECOND MIDWEST CONFERENCE will take place at the Women's Athletic Club, 628 N. Michigan Ave. from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Four distinguished writers, Vondell Petry, Patricia Roland Monaghan, Michael Lee West and Vicki Williams will conduct workshops on several topics, including poetry, freelance and syndicated column writing. The IWWG is a network for the personal and professional empowerment of women through writing. Conference attendees need not be members of the IWWG, and attendance requires no writing prerequisites. Conference fees are \$35 for members, \$70 for non-members (lunch is included). Half-day sessions and overnight accommodations are also available. For further information on the IWWG and conference registration, please contact Hannelore Hahn, c/o IWW, P.O. Box 810, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10026, (212) 737-7536.

### May 11


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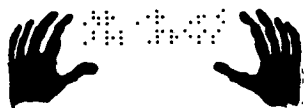
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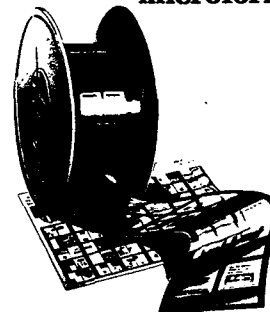
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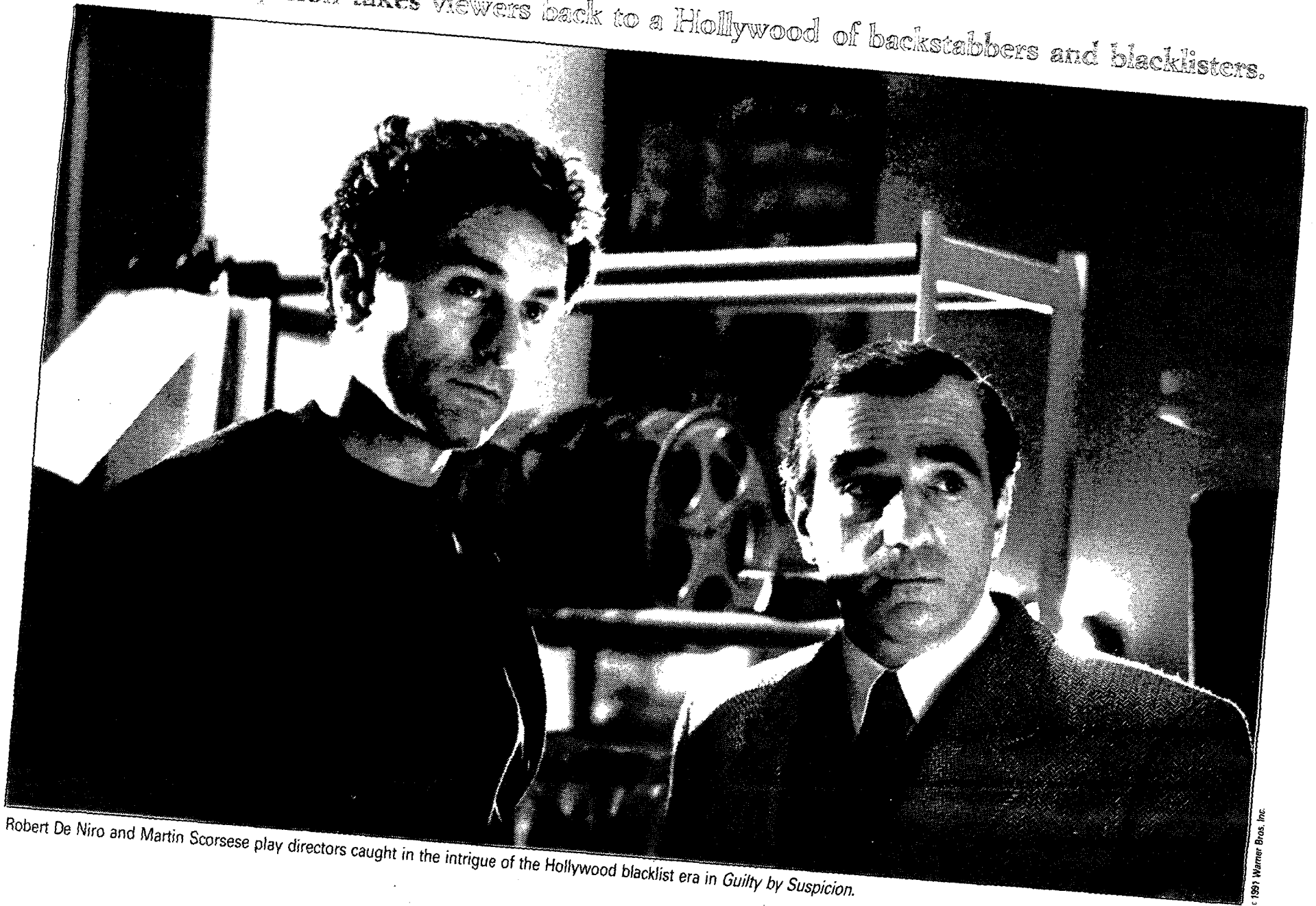
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IN THESE TIMES APRIL 3-9, 1991 23



# Seeing Reds

*Guilty by Suspicion* takes viewers back to a Hollywood of backstabbers and blacklists.



Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese play directors caught in the intrigue of the Hollywood blacklist era in *Guilty by Suspicion*.

## By Pat Dowell

In 1951, actor Larry Parks became the first former Communist Party member in Hollywood to name names to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). He begged, "Don't make me crawl through the mud." Those famous words, uttered by a fictional screenwriter named Larry Nolan, open *Guilty by Suspicion*, Irwin Winkler's new movie about the great Hollywood red scare.

The movie blacklist had already begun when Parks testified. In 1947, during HUAC's first round in Hollywood, 10 writers, producers and directors had challenged the committee's right to grill citizens on their politics. The Hollywood Ten went to jail for contempt of Congress, and the studios panicked. They were eager to rid themselves of troublesome labor organizers anyway, and HUAC provided the perfect opportunity.

The Committee, for its part, loved not only the photo ops and headlines that Hollywood provided but also, as Victor Navasky wrote in his book *Naming Names*, the congressmen struck pay dirt in the entertainment industry. No other hearings provided so many names of possible subversives, and so the blacklist, a private-sector enterprise assisted by the committee, swelled. After Parks, naming names was the only ticket to a continued career for those subpoenaed. This is the poisonous atmosphere to which Winkler's fictional director, David Merrill, returns

after a sojourn in Europe, setting in motion a movie that displays the strengths and weaknesses of a liberal approach to a historical moment during which American liberalism failed, in real life, its most stringent test.

**Career moves:** Merrill (played by Robert De Niro as a flawed hero brought back to his youthful values) is named, of course. *Guilty by Suspicion* charts his quick descent in a year's time from rising star at 20th-Century-Fox to clerk in a Manhattan camera store. Even there, the FBI shoots him down with one of its infamous "routine" inquiries. He learns how fragile his career is, how much it has cost him in his relationships with ex-wife and son. Eventually the dreaded subpoena arrives, and the movie rushes (more suspensefully than I expected) to David Merrill's moment of truth. What will he do when forced to choose between his conscience and the possibility of resuming his career?

It is really this moral dilemma, rather than the politics or the history, that all along interested fledgling writer-director Irwin Winkler in the story. Now one of the most prominent producers in Hollywood (*Rocky*, *Raging Bull*, *GoodFellas*), Winkler was a teenager in the '50s who knew nothing of the blacklist. "I was pretty innocent in those days. Very politically innocent," he says. "I remember watching the Army-McCarthy hearings. I remember Joe Welsh saying, 'Shame on you' to Joe McCarthy."

Like so many other anecdotes of the era, that moment is reproduced in *Guilty by Suspicion* in

a fictional context. Winkler writes (and directs) with great sympathy and respect for the victims of the blacklist, and he's done his homework. Most of his original research was with HUAC resisters, since so-called "friendly witnesses" were uniformly unwilling to talk. "They're embarrassed," he says.

**Hollywood hell:** Winkler mixes real Hollywood history—actors playing mogul Darryl Zanuck and director Howard Hawks, for instance—with fictions drawn from actual incidents. An actress is named by her husband, who then sues for custody of their child (it happened to Dorothy Comingore, who starred in *Citizen Kane*). There's a suicide over a cliff (in real life, Philip Laeb leapt from a window).

Some of Merrill's conversations with Zanuck echo those of director Elia Kazan with the Fox chieftain (perhaps in stalwart David Merrill we see a bit of insider wish-fulfillment and a liberal's rewriting of history, for Kazan, alas, became an informer). And there's one unabashed Commie, Joe Lesser, played by director Martin Scorsese. Lesser is based on director Joseph Losey, who fled to England and eventually made an international reputation there with films such as *The Servant* and *Accident*.

Lesser also recalls John Berry, the blacklisted director whose stories were Winkler's original inspiration. As the idea progressed, Winkler teamed up to write the script with another blacklisted American, Abraham Polonsky, the writer-director famed for *Force of Evil*, the 1948 Marx-

ian gangster epic starring John Garfield. Polonsky and Winkler, however, eventually split over politics. "He felt very strongly that the lead character should be a Communist. I thought it was more interesting to see what happened to an innocent man, a man that really had very little political background," says Winkler.

Curious choice of words, "innocent." Just what were the Communists guilty of? "Well, I don't know that they were guilty of anything. They were called in by the committee to give testimony about themselves and others and the membership that they might have had in the Communist Party," says Winkler on reflection. "The Communist Party was not a criminal organization; it was not an outlawed organization," he continues. "But I don't want the film to be perceived somehow as a defense of Communism. I prefer it to be perceived as a defense of liberty."

On hearing this explanation, a friend of mine whose father was blacklisted said, "What greater defense of liberty is there than to stand up for the rights of a Communist in America?" Winkler's choice of making the hero a man like Merrill has real-life precedents, and De Niro's performance is vigorous enough to allay one's nagging suspicions that *Guilty by Suspicion* somehow evades the issue. And yet, the very title of the film itself suggests that Winkler's figure of speech may be more—a slip of the tongue, a slip of the mind, even,

*Continued on page 22*